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THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

✠ BY PAUL HUTCHINSON ✠



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THE NEXT STEP

THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

THE STORY OF METHODISM

(In collaboration with Halford E. Luccock)

The Story of the Epworth League

By
PAUL HUTCHINSON



Pratt

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN
NEW YORK CINCINNATI

BX 8205
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Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—THE FORERUNNERS.....	7
1. AFTER THE CIVIL WAR WAS OVER.	
2. THE SHOE CLERK WHO SHOOK OXFORD.	
3. A METHODIST PREACHER WHO BELIEVED IN EDUCATION.	
4. THE OXFORD LEAGUE.	
5. THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S METHODIST ALLIANCE.	
6. THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHRISTIAN LEAGUE.	
7. IN MICHIGAN AND OHIO.	
II.—THE FOUNDING	28
1. THE HISTORIC CLEVELAND MEETING.	
2. WHERE THE LEAGUE GOT ITS NAME.	
3. HOW THE LEAGUE GREW.	
4. A DENOMINATIONAL SOCIETY.	
5. EARLY LEADERS.	
6. A JOURNALISTIC MARVEL.	
7. A NEW KIND OF PAPER.	
III.—HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED	47
1. TRAINING FOR SERVICE.	
2. THE FIRST DEPARTMENT.	
3. THE SECOND DEPARTMENT.	
4. THE THIRD DEPARTMENT.	
5. THE FOURTH DEPARTMENT.	
6. OTHER CHANGES THAT THE YEARS BROUGHT.	
7. CHANGING LEADERSHIP.	
8. THE JUNIOR LEAGUE.	
9. THE LEAGUE AS PROPHECY.	

CONTENTS

IV.—THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE 67

1. THE CHURCH'S TRAINING GROUND.
2. WHERE THE LEADERS COME FROM.
3. THE LEAGUE OVERSEAS.
4. THE LEAGUE'S OWN MISSIONS.

V.—GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE 85

1. WHILE THE BOOM WAS ON.
2. THE GREAT CONVENTIONS.
3. CHATTANOOGA—TORONTO—INDIANAPOLIS.
4. SAN FRANCISCO—DETROIT—AND LATER.
5. THE RISE OF THE INSTITUTES.
6. THE INSTITUTE IDEA TAKES HOLD.

VI.—THE LEAGUE TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW..... 103

1. THE LEAGUE AS IT IS.
2. LIFE SERVICE.
3. PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE.
4. CHANGES IN LEAGUE ORGANIZATION.
5. FOUR KINDS OF LEAGUES.
6. THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE LEAGUE.
7. CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER I

THE FORERUNNERS

I. AFTER THE CIVIL WAR WAS OVER

THE Epworth League, they will tell you, is thirty-eight years old. It was born, they will say, on a May day in 1889, and they will name for you the very town, and the street in the town, and the church on the street in the town, and the classroom in the church on the street in the town, in which the event took place. They will tell you who were there; who made the motions; who seconded them; who debated them; who led in prayer. Perhaps I will tell you that myself before I get through with this.

But is it true? Was it when and where they tell that the Epworth League was born? I doubt it. The League, it seems to me, may have taken definite form at Cleveland in 1889, but the League was really born a long time before that. When, do you ask? And where? Well, if I had to give an answer I should say that the League was born in many places, at many times, and among many people. And then if you should object that even leagues cannot be born in that spread-out manner, I would try to explain my meaning by some such story as follows:

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

From 1861 to 1865 this country was locked in the most terrible civil war known to history. Neither side would admit the possibility of defeat. Battles were fought and won, campaigns planned and lost, generals rose to honor and fell to disgrace, and all the time the sacrifice of life went on and on and on. Soon the time came when the original armies were exhausted. Then the older men were called up to fight. And finally, when those were gone, the young men, the lads from the schools and colleges, from the farms and stores, were called on. When the older men fell out, these youngsters filled up the ranks.

It is generally the boys who fight the wars, but the American Civil War called an unusually large percentage of young men into the service. Major-General Robert C. Davis, adjutant-general of the United States army in 1927, wrote me, in response to an inquiry, that an examination of one million Union soldiers made by the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, and reported in 1866, showed that 29.19 per cent of the total were under 21 years of age; that 30.59 per cent of the total were between 21 and 25; that 13.55 per cent of the total were between 26 and 29. In other words, those million typical soldiers—the only ones, according to General Davis, concerning whom there is accurate knowledge—contained 73.33 per cent boys and young men less than thirty years old. And if this was true in the wealthy North, with its tremendous resources of man-power, what must have been the case in the Southern armies?

THE FORERUNNERS

You can see easily enough what an experience of this kind must have done to the thinking of the country. Men and women in the North suddenly awoke to the fact that, while they had been crying, "The Union must and shall be preserved," it had been youth that had actually stepped forward and done the preserving. And in the South, men and women who had been sustained in the face of inevitable defeat by their pride in the dauntless valor of their heroes, suddenly realized that those heroes were really only the boys who had been romping in their schoolyards before the guns opened fire on Sumter. So that, North and South, there came a new recognition of the claims of youth, and a new interest in youth's development and youth's welfare.

This attitude was especially clear in church circles in those years following the Civil War. Perhaps that was because the churches had come so close to the soldiers during the war, and had had such an unusual opportunity to learn what sort of person the real soldier—as distinguished from the fictitious heroes of the war ballads and the stories in the magazines—was. For, North and South, the churches never ceased in their efforts to minister to the soldiers. Chaplains went with the men into battle; some of them went with them into prison; some of them went with them into the dark valley of death. But more of this work was done behind the lines, while the troops lay in the enforced idleness of their winter camps, and particularly among the sick and wounded in the hospitals.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Work of this kind, as you can see, would show the soldier off dress parade, and away from the stimulus of battle. It would show him at his neediest. It was hard, exacting work. It was done by volunteer clergymen and sainted women, and they had to be very wise to succeed at it. But just because they had to be very wise, they came out of the awful years of bloodshed with a new appreciation of the youngster in blue or gray, and a new determination that he should have a larger share in the thinking and life of the church. So, I say, a large portion of the increased attention given to youth by the churches in the period after the Civil War is to be traced directly to the experiences in that war of the ministers and other volunteer workers who served on the Christian Commission.

This new interest in youth on the part of the church showed itself in all sorts of directions. It took such organizations as the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association, for example, and transformed them from feeble and restricted bodies into national institutions of great power. This was especially true of the Y. M. C. A. That body had been planted in the United States ten years before the outbreak of the Civil War, but it had spread only slowly beyond Boston and New York and one or two other of the larger cities. In 1866, the year after the war closed, there were only ninety Associations in the entire country, but then came a sudden sweep which carried the enterprise along at such a rate that, by 1886, there were 1,176.

THE FORERUNNERS

2. THE SHOE-CLERK WHO SHOOK OXFORD.

Unadorned figures of that kind mean little. It is easier to suggest the sort of thing that happened by recalling the personal experiences of one or two individuals. Four years before the Civil War broke out a nineteen-year-old Massachusetts farmer boy left his job as a clerk in a shoe store in Boston and settled in the town with the outlandish name of Chicago which was sprouting up out of the black mud of the Illinois prairies. He was a bit rough-hewn, this young shoe clerk, and obviously without much formal schooling. But he had a true religious fervor in his soul, so that hardly had he landed in the new city beside Lake Michigan before he had a Sunday school started. The Sunday school grew under his hand until it became a marvel of the city. Presently it had a thousand members! Sunday schools of that size are not uncommon now; in those days they were as uncommon as Pullman cars, so that this school became one of the show places of Chicago.

Then the war came. Presently the young man was called away from his Sunday school to work with the Christian Commission among the soldiers. As the war dragged along he developed remarkable ability in meeting men, in winning their confidence, in saying the "word in season" that they needed. When the war was over, and—still less than thirty years of age—he came back to Chicago, the eager young Y. M. C. A. reached out and took him. Days in the shoe store were forever over by that time. Now he was made

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

"city evangelist," and turned loose to bring his army experience to bear on the problems of young men living in the boarding houses of a strange city.

The young man I am telling about, as you have guessed by this time, was named Dwight L. Moody. After he had been working for the "Y" in Chicago awhile some of his friends built a church, and asked him to become pastor of it. He did. He was still a layman, and he remained a layman to the end of his life. But that did not prevent his acting as pastor of any church that wanted him. Later, he started preaching in other cities. He found a friend with a marvelous gift of song, another young man named Ira D. Sankey, and the two of them went singing and preaching about the country, and even over into England. If you do not know what happened as they traveled, ask your father or mother. If they were never in a Moody and Sankey meeting, they at least heard all about them.

One strange experience came to Mr. Moody in 1882. He went back to England for a series of meetings, and found that the committee in charge over there had scheduled him for talks with the students at Oxford and Cambridge universities. He was panic-stricken at the prospect. Working with the sort of youngsters he had known in the army or in the shoe store was one thing. There, it made little difference whether or not there was a "g" on the end of words that were spelled with a final "ing." And if he said, "He ain't"—as he occasionally did—few in his audi-

THE FORERUNNERS

ences would consider the form as at all out of the regular. But Oxford and Cambridge . . . ! No wonder the evangelist almost fled.

If you know the story, you know that Mr. Moody won probably the greatest triumph of his life at those two proud English universities. Oxford and Cambridge were not interested in Mr. Moody as a dispenser of pure English diction. They had plenty of pedants of their own. But they did take notice when they found a real man in their midst. The effects of those meetings are still to be felt. Mission fields are dotted to-day with men who trace their call to Christian service straight back to the work of Moody in the English universities. And those who do not trace directly back to Moody frequently trace back to the meetings of that wonderful Scotch professor, Henry Drummond, who was himself so moved by the work of the American evangelist that, when Mr. Moody went back to his homeland, the professor from Edinburgh was ready to take up the work where the evangelist had dropped it.

By the time Mr. Moody returned home from the trip to the British universities he had one great passion—work for and among young people. So, for the rest of his life, he spent the major portion of his time at his old farm homestead in Northfield, Massachusetts. There, when summer came, he gathered boys and girls from all the colleges in the Eastern part of the United States, and talked with them about the deepening of their religious purposes. And there, in

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

winter, while the snow lay deep on the ground, Mr. Moody built up two great schools, one for boys and one for girls, from which have gone forth hundreds of humanity's leaders. And there, too, one summer day, in the midst of one of those student conferences, there gathered a little company of college boys who, before they separated, had started what you and I know as the Student Volunteer Movement! So that I suppose if you were to try to name the most influential Christian in the Western world during the last half of the nineteenth century, you might very well choose this Boston shoe clerk who was caught up in the church's new enthusiasm for youth in the years that followed the Civil War.

3. A METHODIST PREACHER WHO BELIEVED IN EDUCATION

Now the sort of thing that went on in and around and through Mr. Moody in those years was going on, in lesser degree, in and around and through hundreds of others. Some of those others were Methodists. One of them was a young Methodist minister named John Heyl Vincent, and for the purpose of our story the thing that happened to John Heyl Vincent was far more important, even, than the thing that happened to Mr. Moody. This Methodist minister was five years older than Mr. Moody. Like Moody, he had never had the chance for a college education, but, unlike Moody, he more than made up this lack by prodigious study on his own account. He had started to preach in the

THE FORERUNNERS

city of Newark, New Jersey, when he was eighteen. Four years before the Civil War broke out he, too, moved to Illinois. The outbreak of the war found him preaching in the Methodist church in Galena.

There was a retired army captain in Galena, a short, quiet, dark sort of man, who was not overly given to churchgoing. But when young Vincent came to Galena the captain started attending church. He rarely missed a service. There was the kind of meat in the sermons of the Methodist preacher that the taciturn captain seemed to appreciate. When the war came, Galena raised one of the first companies to start for the front. The captain, naturally, commanded it. The town wanted him to make a speech of farewell, but he stepped aside and let the Methodist preacher make it. After the war, when the captain returned home, the town turned out to welcome him, and again called for a speech. This was what they got:

Friends and Fellow Citizens of the city of Galena: I am truly glad to meet you at this time, and I have requested Mr. Vincent, who came with me on the train, to return you my very sincere thanks for this demonstration.

From this you may guess that the captain was a captain no longer. He was, in fact, a lieutenant-general. His name was Ulysses S. Grant. And Mr. Vincent was by that time pastor of a church in Chicago. As on the day when the Galena soldiers left for the front, he made a good speech.

The years of the war had been stirring years for

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

John H. Vincent. During part of the time he had done the regular work of an earnest pastor; during part of the time he had served with the same Christian Commission of which we have spoken previously; during part of the time he had had the broadening experience—quite unusual in those days—of a leisurely trip through Europe and the Holy Land. All the time he had been preparing himself, sometimes unconsciously and sometimes with full realization of what was at stake, for a career that was to leave its imprint on millions of his fellow countrymen.

For John H. Vincent, in those years when the nation and the church were awakening to the value and possibilities of youth, caught a glimpse of what it might mean if knowledge were made universally available for these young people. He began in the Sunday school. As a pastor, he founded Sunday-school classes which were real classes. Attendants in them learned more of the geography, the history, the sociology of Bible lands than did many a student at a theological seminary. Later he started the first real quarterly for use by Sunday-school classes, and after that he was responsible for the production of a tremendous library of material for teachers and class attendants. The International Sunday-school Lessons were an idea of his. For twenty years he labored as the corresponding secretary of the Sunday-school board (it was called a "union" in those days) of our church.

But John H. Vincent could not be satisfied with

THE FORERUNNERS

working only inside the Sunday school. He had something within him that kept him reaching out. He reached in many directions. One reach put him, in the summer of 1874, on the shores of Lake Chautauqua, in the western part of the State of New York, where he held what we would now call an institute for Sunday-school workers. What came out of that any of you who have ever heard of the Chautauqua movement know. Most people will agree that Chautauqua was the most successful effort to educate large masses of people without the use of formal school methods that America has known.

4. THE OXFORD LEAGUE

But a later one of his reaches was in another direction. Ten years after he had started the summer institutes at Chautauqua, a General Conference made John H. Vincent a bishop. Bishop Vincent had been feeling for a long time that there was a need among the young people in his church that neither Sunday school, nor Y. M. C. A., nor Y. W. C. A., nor Chautauqua, nor any other organization was meeting. He sought to meet that need with a society for Methodist young people. To this society he gave the name of the Oxford League. And if you want to know when and where the Epworth League was born, you will have to go back to Bishop Vincent and his Oxford League.

By that I do not mean that the whole of the impulse toward the Epworth League came out of the Oxford

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

League. Part of it, as I have tried to show, came out of the general reawakening of interest in youth on the part of the church during the twenty years following the Civil War. Part of it came out of such undenominational work for students and other young people as was done, during the same period, by a man like Dwight L. Moody. Part of it came from the example of other young people's organizations. Some of these had been within the Methodist Church, as in the case of the Church Lyceum organized in the Fifty-first Street Methodist Church of Philadelphia in 1871, and approved by the General Conference in 1876. Some had been outside, like the Christian Endeavor Society organized by Dr. Francis E. Clark in the Williston Congregational Church of Portland in 1881. But of them all, a study of the Epworth League to-day will show that more of what we now have comes from the Oxford League founded by Bishop Vincent than from any other source.

What sort of body was the Oxford League? If you turn back to what its own officers said about it, you will find that they talked this way: "The Oxford League of 1884 is a reproduction of the Oxford Club of 1729-37, having for its end the revival of the four objects of that club: 1. The more careful study of the Word of God; 2. The study of literature; 3. The increase of personal piety; and, 4. The training of its members in works of mercy and help." It will be seen that the emphasis here was pretty strong on "study"—as was apt to be the case in anything that Bishop Vin-

THE FORERUNNERS

cent had a hand in. In his first number of *The Epworth Herald*, Dr. Joseph F. Berry tried to characterize the Oxford League as an organization that "sought to develop the young people symmetrically but emphasized culture." Bishop Vincent took vigorous exception to this characterization in the next issue, but I am inclined to think that Doctor Berry was, in the main, correct.

I find, for instance, in looking back over literature of the Oxford League, that in 1886-87 the officers had the courage to urge on their members the systematic use of *twenty-four* different courses of study! Some of these were worked out by the Chautauqua organization, but the majority were designed especially for the young people's society. What would the Epworth Leaguer of to-day think if, in his first year in the League, he had to study a course that included chapters from Matthew and Acts; the "Our Own Church" series of nine pamphlets setting forth the position of Methodism in the holy catholic church; a book entitled *Outlines of Methodism*, by James McGee, and the "Oxford Series" of seven more pamphlets on Methodism? Whatever the modern Leaguer might think of such a program, its pursuit might not do him any harm.

The Oxford League had a program of twelve definite duties for its members. As listed in the manuals of that time, they were to:

1. Attend the public services of the church.
2. Attend prayer meeting.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

3. Attend class meeting.
4. Promote religious music. (Incidentally, Ira D. Sankey and P. P. Bliss were the models favored.)
5. Distribute religious literature, especially tracts.
6. Encourage dignity and reverence at all religious services.
7. Assist in pastoral visitation.
8. Assist in pastoral instruction, especially by teaching in the Sunday school.
9. Engage in helpful work about the church, such as making scrapbooks for shut-ins, fixing up the church yard, painting the church, and the like.
10. Promote "At Home Schools"—a scheme Bishop Vincent worked out, whereby the whole family would be gathered for regular weekly Bible study.
11. Develop other chapters of the Oxford League.
12. Further the benevolences of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

I wonder how such a list of duties would appeal to Epworthians to-day? Suppose you take them into a meeting of your chapter and find out. "Making scrapbooks for shut-ins" has a last-century flavor, hasn't it?

Personally, I have found great enjoyment in looking over the files of *Our Youth*, the paper that was published by the Oxford League, and that later disappeared in the *Epworth Herald*. Bishop Vincent edited this weekly for some time. Then, although his name remained at the masthead, the actual work passed into the hands of two youngsters who graduated at

THE FORERUNNERS

Yale in the class of 1885. One of them was the bishop's son, George E. Vincent, and the other was his son's friend, James R. Joy. George E. Vincent was later to become the president of one of the great State universities of the Middle West, and is now the head of the earth-embracing Rockefeller Foundation. And if you want to know what became of the other young assistant editor, I suggest that you take a look at the editorial pages of *The Christian Advocate*, Methodism's famous weekly journal.

A glance at a single issue of *Our Youth* will give an idea of the sort of reading and thinking the Oxford League tried to encourage. I am looking, as I write, at the issue for May 10, 1890. It starts with a continued story: "Jeff Roderer's First Round"—just such a yarn as you might find in any young people's paper, although of distinctly higher class than the ordinary story in the ordinary "Sunday-school" weekly. Then follow an article by a professor on geological remains; another on methods of Bible study by the president of Wesleyan University; comments on the Sunday-school lesson; three pages on the topics of the Epworth League and on news of various chapters; a sort of miscellaneous page or two, with a heavy-type warning: "Weekly Black List—That familiar ending -ed; don't slight it. *Rested* sounds much better, than -id."

The advertisements may recall old memories to some readers. Among them there were expositions of the merits of Scott's Emulsion; Hood's Sarsaparilla; Oli-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

ver Ditson's collection of music books; Henry Drummond's new book, *The Greatest Thing in the World*; five thousand agents wanted to sell *History of Stanley's Wonderful Adventures in Africa*; the Little Detective Camera; Ingersoll Brothers' Printing Outfit; McAllister's Magic Lanterns, and, of course, Hunt & Eaton with a full line of Methodistic and Epworth League supplies.

I find, too, in leafing through those old magazines, that some things have not changed so much in these almost forty years. The young people seem to have been going straight to perdition then, in the opinion of some of their elders, just as they are to-day. Thus, in the issue for February 8, 1890, I find a review of a book entitled, *Dying at the Top*; or, *The Moral and Spiritual Condition of the Young Men of America*. The book was written by the Rev. J. W. Clokey, D.D., and while I have never had the privilege of examining a copy, I judge by the review that what Doctor Clokey had to say about the moral and spiritual condition of the young men of America in 1890—and my own father was only twenty-eight then!—was plenty. "The author," says the reviewer, "draws a very dark picture of the moral condition of American young men—one that would be called overdrawn were not the facts themselves exhibited. The picture is true to life." And yet, religion survived!

From all this is it possible for you to gain any impression of what the Oxford League was like? I think I see them, a company of earnest young men

THE FORERUNNERS

and women, gathered in many churches, carefully reading their way through the courses selected by the enthusiast for education who had called the organization into being; meeting together, as did those original Methodists at Oxford, to compare their spiritual and their intellectual problems and development; eager to put their religion into practice in the extension of the work of the church and in deeds of helpfulness to the needy; glad to subscribe for a magazine that talked about geology as well as Bible study—honest, clean, idealistic, devoted young folks—just as typically the young folks of the eighties of that century as the readers of these lines are the typical young folks of the twenties of still another century.

5. THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S METHODIST ALLIANCE

From all this talk about the Oxford League you must not, of course, get the idea that this was the only organization which, before the days of the Epworth League, was trying to provide opportunity for the young people of Methodism. There was, for instance, the Young People's Methodist Alliance. The Young People's Methodist Alliance was a result of a mighty stirring that came to a company of young people who attended the camp meeting at the Des Plaines camp ground, just outside Chicago, in 1883. Some evangelistic preaching there had seemed peculiarly powerful, and a group of young people, naturally enough, thought that the impression of this preaching should not be allowed to disappear in a mere emo-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

tional thrill. So they organized something. And the "something" was the Alliance.

The Alliance prospered mightily. A young layman named Henry Date poured his soul into it, and that helped largely to explain its success. Years later, when I first began attending Epworth League meetings, many of the songbooks which we used bore the name, Henry Date, in the publisher's space. It was the same man. In those early days Mr. Date's time was almost wholly given to the Alliance, of which he was the first president.

Emphasis was placed on personal religion rather than on the intellectual discipline which bulked so large in the plans of the Oxford League. "Holiness to the Lord," was the principal motto of the Alliance, and its ideals for its membership were well expressed in the pledge which each active member had to sign:

I enjoy or will seek the blessing of heart purity as taught in the Scriptures. I promise to abstain from the use of tobacco and of all intoxicants as a beverage, to refrain from card-playing and dancing, and from attending the theater, the opera, the circus, and all other questionable places of amusement. I agree to have stated seasons of private prayer, to pray for my pastor and for the members of the Young People's Methodist Alliance, to study the Bible each day, and to give daily thought to the winning of souls, by personal conversation, letter writing, tract distribution, prayer, or other means.

6. THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHRISTIAN LEAGUE

Another organization came into being among the

THE FORERUNNERS

young Methodists of New England, and was known as the Young People's Christian League. Its best known leader was probably a young minister named William I. Haven, who to-day presides over the destinies of the American Bible Society. It was a sort of catch-all organization, aiming to gather into one body all the young people's lyceums, guilds, bands, societies, and the like that had grown up in the individual Methodist churches of New England. There was something about the flexible nature of the Young People's Christian League which appealed even outside New England, so that there soon came to be auxiliaries in Texas, Dakota, South Carolina, Georgia, New York, Ohio, and other States.

If you wonder what part the Young People's Christian League may have had in fostering the Epworth League, it is enough to say that its motto was, "Look up; lift up." The motto was suggested by Bishop Vincent, who wandered into the meeting at which the Christian League was organized. Bishop Vincent had a way of being on hand when any matter affecting the welfare of youth was in the wind.

7. IN MICHIGAN AND OHIO

Up in Michigan there was still another body, the Methodist Young People's Union. This was an organization that grew directly out of a resolution adopted in a preachers' meeting—one of the few cases on record where a resolution adopted in a preachers' meeting led to some important action. Originally, this

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

body was known as the Young People's Society of Detroit Conference. But a name like that was far too restricted for the ambitious young Methodists of Michigan. So they took a title that included more territory, and thus the Methodist Young People's Union came to be.

Finally, over in the North Ohio Annual Conference, the pastors forced the organization of still another body. Within their churches they had local societies of almost all these kinds of Methodist young people's organizations. There were Oxford Leagues, and Christian Leagues, and Young People's Alliances. And the result was confusion. The Ohio pastors sought to lessen that confusion by starting a new body, all their own, into which all these other societies might be merged. They called their new body the North Ohio Conference Methodist Episcopal Alliance—which is a fairly sure indication that preachers, and not young people, picked out the title.

So here is the story, hastily told, of the way in which, after boys had fought a bloody war, nation and church came to have a new understanding of the worth of youth; of the way in which the church tried to discharge the responsibility which came with this understanding; of the new religious stirring among youth that followed, not only in the United States but in England and Scotland as well. It is the story of a great soul like Dwight L. Moody, afire for the welfare of the youth of the world, and of another great soul like John Heyl Vincent, with that same passion for

THE FORERUNNERS

the welfare of the youth of Methodism. Then it is the story of the growth of organizations of many kinds, all dedicated to the religious needs of young people, and of those organizations springing up inside the Methodist Church and growing there until the day came, at last, when it was clear to all observers that the time for another organization had come—an organization that should gather up and bring to fruition all the promise of what had gone before.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDING

I. THE HISTORIC CLEVELAND MEETING

So we come to Cleveland. Cleveland on a mid-May day in 1889, with thirty serious-faced gentlemen sitting about in a classroom within the Central Methodist Church. Pressure of opinion from the church at large had brought this meeting to pass, as we have already suggested, but it soon became evident that not all the delegates present were convinced that the time had come to respond to this pressure by scrapping the previously organized young people's societies and forming a single society to serve the whole denomination. There was no question but that the church desired the single body, but after the Cleveland meeting had been in progress only a little while it became apparent that unity would be achieved only by desperate effort, if at all.

As we look back across these thirty-eight years to that Cleveland meeting one of the first things likely to strike us is the age of the delegates. It was distinctly a meeting of elders trying to plan a good thing for young people. The idea of letting the young people do the planning seems never to have occurred to the church leaders of that period. The League literature

THE FOUNDING

of the past has carefully preserved the pictures of the men who sat in the Cleveland meeting, looking as they looked then. Run through the portrait gallery quickly and the main impression given you is likely to be that of a composite study in whiskers. There are not, to be sure, many hirsute adornments as luxuriant as those of Michelangelo's "Moses," but there are many that outrange the Smith brothers. In the whole group there were only five clean-shaven faces, and these five in each instance were adorned with the type of whiskers known to history as burnsides! It was anything but a "youth movement," that Cleveland meeting, although it was devoted, completely and sincerely, to the welfare of youth.

There would be no value in relating here all that took place during the two days that the meeting was in progress. But the debating was vigorous, and again and again it seemed as though no possible way could be found to meet the demands of all the strong-minded men who were there. Indeed, on the afternoon of the second day, after it looked as though the birth of a new and unified Methodist organization for young people had actually taken place, one delegation threw a bomb into the gathering by announcing its withdrawal. Then came some tall scurrying about during the supper hour, with mutual compromise and adjustment being arranged out of meeting. And finally, when the evening session came to order, it was found possible to bring all the societies together again for the forming of an entirely new society. It was about midnight.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

when the action was complete. Next day the word went out to the church that Young People's Methodist Alliance and Oxford League and Young People's Christian League and Methodist Young People's Union and North Ohio Conference Methodist Episcopal Alliance were no more, but that, in their place, there stood a new organization—the Epworth League.

2. WHERE THE LEAGUE GOT ITS NAME

How did it come to be called the Epworth League? That's an interesting tale. When the delegates met in Cleveland they were all familiar with a small hymnal that The Methodist Book Concern had published not long before, and for which Bishop Vincent had furnished an introduction. It was called *The Epworth Hymnal*, and was probably as fine a book of its kind as was published during that period when the influence of Ira D. Sankey and P. P. Bliss and their contemporaries was at its height.

One of the rocks on which the Cleveland conference nearly wrecked itself was in its choice of a name for the new society. At one time the delegates actually voted to call the new organization the Wesley League, but that vote seems later to have been lost sight of without ever being formally rescinded. At any rate, while this matter of a name was under discussion one delegate representing the Oxford League made an impassioned plea for the continuation of that name in the united body.

THE FOUNDING

At a time like that any argument is a good argument. The Oxford Leaguer, trying to bring into play every idea that might possibly influence the reluctant representatives of the other societies, suddenly bethought him of *The Epworth Hymnal*, which he knew was in use in practically all young people's meetings. There was an idea—the linking of the Oxford League and *The Epworth Hymnal*—that might sound like a fine combination of Methodist historical allusion! But when he came to spring his argument the orator did what many a lesser speaker has done—he twisted the parts of his sentence. Instead of saying what he meant to say, he implored the delegates to see how fine it would sound to have “the Oxford Hymnal and the Epworth League!”

“Fine!” spoke up another delegate on the instant. “The Epworth League—that’s just the name we want!” And from that accidental suggestion the idea took root until finally the whole meeting was won to it, and the Epworth League was voted into being.

3. HOW THE LEAGUE GREW

It is hard for the Leaguer of to-day to realize with what a thrill the young Methodists of 1889 and the early nineties heard of the formation of the Epworth League. Before the church papers had time to carry official news of the event to their readers, requests began to pour in on the temporary offices in New York for charters, or for information as to how to go about organizing chapters. Some pastors, who had been

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

wondering what on earth to do with their young people—as, alas! too many pastors seem to have to wonder in all decades—leaped at this chance to introduce into their congregations a society designed for exactly this group. In other churches it was the pressure applied by the young people themselves that induced the pastor and the official board to permit organization.

As has been said, statistics are cold things—sometimes. But when it comes to the early months of the Epworth League, the figures are enough, in themselves, to give some impression of the sort of prairie fire that swept the church. It was the middle of May when the Epworth League was organized. Seven months later, on December 13, 1889, *Our Youth*—which was still the organ of the League—printed the first figures, which showed that, in the seven months, charters had been granted 1,480 chapters. When May 15, 1890, came, and the League celebrated its first birthday, there were 1,821 chapters.

Almost two thousand chapters in the first year! It seemed unbelievable, and the officers did well to caution the members of the board of control, when they held their first meeting, against expecting the growth to continue at that rate. "This is the first outburst of youthful enthusiasm," they warned. "But it must be about exhausted now, and if there is any more growth at all, it will be very slow." Wise caution, but needless. For when the second anniversary came it was found that the League had 5,602 chapters! And the next year it went up to 8,102 chapters! And the

THE FOUNDING

next to 10,200! And the next to 12,519! And the next to 14,719! And the next to 16,302!

Well, that's seven years, and far enough to go with the figures, although the peak had not been reached then by several thousand chapters. But from these figures it is evident what happened. There must have been, stored up and bottled away inside the church an immense reservoir of energy belonging to the church's young people, without means of expressing itself in any way other than by attending services. The Epworth League gave the young people a place in the total denominational machine in which they fitted; it opened the way for the power to be released; it gave the young people a chance to translate their enthusiasm and energy into action. No wonder the new society prospered!

4. A DENOMINATIONAL SOCIETY

Of course there were some who were not wholly satisfied with the way things worked out. The objection most frequently raised was against the formation of a distinctively denominational society, for some felt that it would have been wiser to have entered the Christian Endeavor Society, which was at the same time embarking on the fine career which it has had as an interdenominational organization.

The arguments which were used to meet this suggestion make interesting reading to-day. One pamphlet put out by the officers of the Epworth League at that time listed five main reasons why a denomina-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

tional society was felt to be better for the purposes in view than would have been membership in an inter-denominational body. In the first place, it was said that Methodists have always been "a peculiar people." "For a hundred years," said the pamphlet, "we have been successful according to the measure that we have sought to be ourselves and to do our work in our own way." In the second place, the plans of the Epworth League were held to be better than those of other societies. Third, the League was desired to promote an intelligent denominational loyalty. Fourth, it was felt desirable that young Methodists should read distinctively Methodist literature. Fifth, it was said that a society had more chance for permanence if it were kept within the regular denominational machinery.

It cannot be said that the argument between the League and the Christian Endeavor Society helped, to any appreciable extent, to further the cause of inter-denominational good will. The Christian Endeavor Society proposed that the League be absorbed in it—the sort of proposal which is rarely very welcome, and especially in the case of an organization that is jumping from two thousand to almost six thousand chapters in a single year. But if the League was not in the mood to accept the invitation to come in and be swallowed, it was nevertheless probably true that more urbane language could have been found in which to word the declination. Words like these have a strange, far-off sound to-day: "In discharging our manifest duty we certainly are not withdrawing our young peo-

THE FOUNDING

ple from the 'interdenominational movement' which you recognize in the Christian Endeavor Society. We seek only to re-enforce that movement grandly. Temporary segregation for purposes of drill, discipline, indoctrination, and spiritual culture interferes not with, but rather promotes, interdenominational fraternity and co-operation."

Does all this seem of minor importance? Probably it is, and was. It is mentioned here simply because there was a time when the question of amalgamation with another body was the liveliest issue within the Epworth League. And there are a few places where the scars of those old battles can still be found.

5. EARLY LEADERS

But the League was riding the waves in those days too successfully to be much embarrassed by any debate as to policies. The charters were going into the mails at the rate of almost a hundred a week, and from all parts of the church the cry was coming from young people recently organized, "What shall we do?" In our next chapter we shall give some suggestion of what those early Leaguers were recommended to do. Here we want to mention a few of the early leaders on whom fell the responsibility for directing the doing.

Methodist Church societies have a way of placing bishops in their presidential chairs. It has been so with the Epworth League from the beginning. Its first president was Bishop J. N. FitzGerald. Bishop FitzGerald proved a good presiding officer at the meet-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

ings of the League Board of Control, although he never gave the office of president anything like the active part in League affairs which it has held in recent years.

The outstanding personality of those first years was Dr. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut. Doctor Hurlbut was one of those geniuses who could always take on another job, and do it well. Years before, he had come within the range of Bishop Vincent's interest, and from that time on he had been intimately identified with all the work for young people in which the bishop had a hand. Thus, when Chautauqua was founded, Doctor Hurlbut soon came to be one of its mainstays. When Bishop (then Doctor) Vincent turned to the production of Sunday-school quarterlies and other Sunday-school literature, he found in Dr. Hurlbut one of his most trusty associates. And when Doctor Vincent left the secretaryship of the Sunday School Union to become a bishop, it was but natural that Doctor Hurlbut should succeed him.

In the same way, when Bishop Vincent founded the Oxford League, he turned to Doctor Hurlbut for support, and, as usual, found what he sought. The new secretary of the Sunday School Union had exactly the same ideas as did his former chief concerning the proper plan for a young people's organization. For some time the Oxford League did not gain chapters with any great rapidity, probably because its program called for so much study on the part of members. But at the beginning of 1889 Doctor Hurlbut started a

THE FOUNDING

general advance, and from then until the Cleveland meeting, when the Epworth League was organized, the Oxford League went ahead by leaps and bounds. The spirit and breadth of vision of Doctor Hurlbut were shown when, as leader of the Oxford League delegation at Cleveland, he permitted his society, while in the most prosperous period of its history, to disappear from sight.

With the Epworth League brought into being, the question arose as to who should be its responsible officers. Under the old conditions the Oxford League had been guided by the officers of the Sunday School Union, and this same arrangement was continued until the first meeting of the Board of Control, in February of the following year, when Doctor Hurlbut was regularly elected corresponding secretary. This position he continued to hold throughout the critical years of the League's greatest growth, surrendering it only in 1892, when the General Conference decided that the Epworth League needed a secretary of its own, unencumbered by other responsibilities. By every test Doctor Hurlbut made a great secretary.

It is impossible to speak of Doctor Hurlbut without recalling the man who was his comrade in so many good fights—Dr. Robert R. Doherty. Doctor Doherty was another product of the Vincent school of Sunday-school work, and was, by virtue of his position as recording secretary of the Sunday School Union, one of the officers of the Oxford League. He was the leading diplomat on the Oxford League delegation at

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Cleveland, and it was his Irish tongue that became twisted into saying "Epworth League," and so, unwittingly, christened the new organization. When Doctor Hurlbut became corresponding secretary, Doctor Doherty became recording secretary—and the recording secretaryship of the Epworth League was no sinecure in those days of Aladdin-like growth.

6. A JOURNALISTIC MARVEL

But none of the men we have mentioned, nor any of the other scores of devoted workers who sprang up in that period, had as much influence on the League as did an institution which was not in existence when the League was born, and a young man who was not mentioned among the early leaders. That institution—there is no other adequate term to use—was The Epworth Herald, and that young man was the editor who brought it into being and directed its conduct until his election to the episcopacy fourteen years later.

When the Epworth League started, it adopted almost intact the ideas, constitutions, officers, and all the other paraphernalia of the Oxford League. Accordingly, it adopted also, as its own journal, the weekly of the Oxford League concerning which we have already spoken, Our Youth. But it soon became apparent that Our Youth was not the kind of paper that the crowding thousands of new Epworthians were looking for. So that the strongest resolutions passed by that meeting of the Board of Control in February, 1890, called on The Methodist Book Concern to start

THE FOUNDING

a paper that should be of, by, and for the Epworth League. And the Book Concern, seeing here a new constituency, made haste to adopt the suggestion. A new weekly was decreed, to be published at Chicago, and to be edited by—whom?

Well, of course there were plenty of candidates, but the arm of the Book Committee finally reached out and gathered in a young fellow of thirty-one years who was then the assistant editor of the Michigan Christian Advocate. It may have seemed like a heavy responsibility to place on a man so young—that of building a paper from the ground up—but the new editor, who had begun preaching several years before he entered his twenties, was much older in experience than in years. Moreover, there was a decided advantage in picking a young man, for what was wanted was a paper different from anything that the religious world had known, and a young editor would probably come closer to achieving the unique than would a man whose editorial habits had been fixed for years.

Perhaps that is the way the Book Committee members argued when they made their choice; and if they did, the event showed their wisdom. For the choice, as you know, was Joseph F. Berry, who became for more than a decade the most conspicuous figure in the Epworth League movement. The young editor moved from Detroit to Chicago. It took him almost no time to size up the job ahead of him. And then, without fuss or waste motion, he swung into his task. He sent to Evanston and brought from the campus of Garrett

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Biblical Institute a young theological student who was more familiar with printer's ink than with lexicons, Stephen J. Herben, who thereupon became assistant editor.

But assistant editor of what? What was the name of the paper to be? Various titles were suggested—The Epworth News, The Epworth Standard, The Epworth Advocate, and so on. But the publishing agent at Chicago, Dr. W. P. Stowe, had become convinced that The Epworth Herald was the proper name, and for that name he stood out until it was finally adopted. Subscriptions were to be \$1.50 a year, but, to encourage chapters subscribing en bloc, a rate of \$1 for clubs of ten or more, and of eighty cents a year to clubs of twenty-five or more, was fixed. The paper was to contain sixteen pages a week.

Doctor Berry and Mr. Herben, with one or two other helpers, went to work on April 1. One month later, on May 1, the first number of The Epworth Herald appeared. It bore date of June 1, but some canny soul in the Book Concern had conceived the idea of getting it out a month ahead of time, and distributing it broadcast, thus giving the church at large the whole month of May in which to make up its mind whether it liked the new paper or not.

As it turned out, the extra month was not needed. From the day its first issue came from the press The Epworth Herald was not only a journalistic hit; it was a sensation. By October of that first year there were 27,000 subscribers; by January, 1891, there were 30,-

THE FOUNDING

ooo; by the end of 1891 there were 55,000! And that climb went on and on until the hundred thousand mark was reached and passed—the largest circulation ever achieved by an official denominational weekly in the United States!

7. A NEW KIND OF PAPER

What was it that drew readers in such numbers to the new paper? As has been often said, it was the fact that it was new in its ideas, new in its form, new in its way of going about its task, more than the fact that it was merely new, that brought the subscriptions piling into the offices of The Methodist Book Concern until the clerks were forced to work far into the night, and even then could not keep up with the rush. We turn back now to look at those early issues and we have no difficulty in realizing what a change Doctor Berry introduced into religious journalism with his new paper.

Religious journalism prior to 1890 had been a pretty solemn, long-faced, and—what was worse—long-winded affair. The first editorial page of The Epworth Herald carried an admonition entitled "Cut It Short!" and announcing that eight hundred words would be the maximum length for any article, with five hundred much preferred. "The Epworth Herald will not print essays," announced bold Editor Berry, and knocked at least half a century of religious journalism into a cocked hat with a sentence. "Short, pungent, pithy, snappy things will be at a premium in

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

this sanctum. Our paper may not be brilliant, but it must be breezy."

Doctor Berry knew how to write "short, pungent, pithy, snappy things" himself, and his editorial page showed it. This, for instance, is the first editorial column that he sent to the public:

Organize a chapter.

Form a district League.

Rally all the young people.

Attend the spring conventions.

Scattered forces are easily beaten.

Celebrate League anniversary day.

We're building ten (chapters) a day.

Random shooting brings down no game.

Organization gives system. System gives power.

Plan League work carefully. Then work your plan.

The elements of Epworth success—snap, tact, pluck.

Organize around a prayer service. Make that the core.

Our bishops are all in the Epworth army. God bless them.

THE FOUNDING

A little hard sense goes well with a good deal of genuine religion.

The League must have a great national convention after awhile.

Love of the theater and love of the prayer meeting—well, the two loves don't get along well together.

This nervous, pointed way of putting things soon came to be recognized as the trade-mark of the new editor, and was generally called, among his professional colleagues, the "Berry style"—a phrase generally shortened, for convenience sake, to the "B. S." As another example of the way in which it could be employed to carry ideas to readers who would never wade through long and involved arguments, take this description that the editor inserted in the same first number :

THE LIVE YOUNG METHODIST

Is not a bigot.
Stands by his pastor.
Speaks out in meeting.
Lives on the sunny side.
Speaks only kind words.
Is a student of the Word.
Is loyal to his own church.
Does not fire at long range.
Is full of practical sympathy.
Believes in the Sunday school.
Has a clean heart—and mouth.
Is always at the prayer meeting.
Knows how to do personal work.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Pays something—systematically.

Has a thirst for added knowledge.

Has great respect for old people.

Does not spend much time in Grumbler Alley.

Turns a cold shoulder to all questionable amusements.

Is particularly fond of the Department of Mercy and Help.

Believes that these are the best times this old world has ever seen.

Finds out what the devil would have him do, and then does—the other thing.

And last, though by no means least, is an enthusiastic reader of *The Epworth Herald*.

In this same vivid style one finds, in that first summer, Doctor Berry's description of "Our Model Contributor." Because the description describes the paper itself, as it was at that period, it is worth reproducing here:

OUR MODEL CONTRIBUTOR

Makes points.

Uses simple language.

Builds short sentences.

Does not deal in irony.

Avoids senseless flattery.

Keeps out of literary ruts.

Does not quote much Latin.

Quits when he gets through.

Does not dot t's and cross i's.

Uses no vinegar on pen point.

Sends an unblotted manuscript.

Looks on all sides of a question.

Writes on one side of the paper.

THE FOUNDING

Forgets to write an "introduction."

Has something worth talking about.

Writes five hundred words and then uses a final period.

Does not try to be a second edition of Lord Macaulay.

If not successful on first attempt, resolutely tries again.

Does not imagine himself an embryo Longfellow or Milton.

Does not write the editor down an imbecile if manuscript is rejected.

Has too much sense to send a long "piece" to the Herald sanctum.

Does not complain of the squeezings of the Herald compressor.

Does not explain to the editor that the matter inclosed was "dashed off" in a hurry.

And last, though not least, studies the style of writers who win and writers who lose. Adopts the excellencies of the one and avoids the errors of the other.

There wasn't much pretension about writing of that kind, was there? Not much Lord Macaulay; not much pontifical ponderousness. But why should there have been? The constituency that Doctor Berry was trying to reach was not a pontifical constituency. He was after the young people, and he knew that they must be approached in ways far different from those generally employed by the editors of church papers.

The eye of the paper was never off youth. "Young Men at the Front," cries an editorial in those early issues, and goes on to say that:

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

President Candler, Emory college, is thirty-five.

President Hyde, of Dartmouth, is slightly above thirty.

Chancellor McDowell, of Denver University, is not much more than a youngster.

Prof. W. R. Harper, who will probably be president of the University of Chicago, is only thirty-four.

President Quayle, the new president of Baker University, is the youngest college president in the land—twenty-eight.

Prof. Henry Wade Rogers, dean of the Law Department of Michigan University, is yet numbered among the young men.

There were some great names in that brief editorial. It was characteristic of the early days of The Epworth Herald that its editor, himself a young man, should hail these other young men as they topped the horizon of public interest, and use their achievements as an inspiration for the thousands of other young people who were looking to him for leading.

It is impossible, of course, to give the full flavor and the full range of interest of a paper as diverse as The Epworth Herald in those early nineties. These extracts from its pages can serve only as the merest hints. But perhaps there is hint enough here so that you can understand how it came to pass that, in those formative days, more than officers, more than constitutions, more than courses of study, more than any other thing, it was a paper, and, of course, that paper's editor, which molded the Epworth League into the mighty force that it became.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

I. TRAINING FOR SERVICE

DOCTOR STEPHEN J. HERBEN once remarked that the first period of the League's life centered around the word "Organize," but that this slogan gradually gave way in favor of the phrase, "Training for service." As has been said, Doctor Herben was on the staff of The Epworth Herald during those years of the early nineties when the League was growing by leaps and bounds, and later he returned to spend eight notable years as editor of the League's official organ. He therefore had opportunity to know many years of League life intimately, and his remark probably summarizes the course of League development as succinctly and accurately as it could be summarized.

In the previous chapter we caught some glimpses of what it was like to be an Epworth Leaguer during the days when the watchword was "Organize." Now it is time to recall the more drab, but more important, record of the years when the young people who had flocked to join the League were being drilled in the various forms of Christian service for which the League provided preparation. It will be hard to make this part of the story sound exciting. Anyone who has ever served on a League cabinet or committee knows

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

how little excitement there is about the ordinary run of departmental work. (Of course, there *is* some excitement when a devotional meeting leader turns up missing on Sunday evening at a quarter after six, or when a bunch of alleged humorists make off with the fourth department ice cream. But that's a kind of excitement you can hardly bring into a story of this kind.) But it is this regular week-in and week-out work of the departments which is the important part of League life, and which, in times past, kept a great outburst of enthusiasm on the part of the first Leaguers from dissipating itself in mere emotion.

How was the Epworth League organized to train its members for service? As has been said, the main outlines of the original organization were taken over from the old Oxford League. Indeed, one of the conditions on which the Oxford League came into the new body was that its constitution for local chapters should be made the constitution for chapters of the Epworth League. In the course of a few years, under the correction of experience, changes were made, but the general outline of League work as it was in the early nineties was not much different from the outline that the Oxford League had originally evolved.

Since the local League chapter was then, as it is now, the main cog in the whole organization, we will do well to recall first of all the way in which that body was put together. It had then, as it has now, a cabinet. The cabinet was composed then, as now, of the pastor of the church, the president of the chapter, the vice-

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

presidents in charge of departments, the secretary and treasurer, and—if a Junior League had been organized—the superintendent of that body. If there were other officers whose functions the chapter thought important, they, too, were frequently included in the cabinet.

There were four departments then, just as there are four departments now. Technically, I know, there were really six departments, for the secretary was supposed to head a department of correspondence and the treasurer a department of finance. Actually, however, these two departments never had much meaning. The secretary, then as now, was the person who kept minutes, wrote letters, and looked after other matters of that sort. And the treasurer, then as now, was the poor unfortunate who scrambled about trying to induce a set of chronically broke young people to keep their dues paid up.

At the head of each of the departments which were real departments there was a vice-president. Just when the habit started of referring to these four important officers as "vices" I do not know. Unfortunately, the first perpetrator of that barbarous abbreviation was not executed on the spot, which gave the disease a chance to spread until for years the League has been afflicted—if you listen to the talk of its members—with "vices" who, to all outward appearance, have been quite respectable young men and women.

2. THE FIRST DEPARTMENT

It is interesting to look back and discover what those

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

original departments were, what they were expected to accomplish, and what changes have come in their names and duties in the course of the years. Without trying to make this too much of a "then and now" chapter, suppose we take up that original League organization department by department and see what it looked like.

The first department was called, in those days, the department of spiritual work. That is not much different from the first department of the present, is it? Nor was the conception of the department's duties as different as is the case with the other three main divisions. To be sure, the first department originally was responsible for activities which have since been transferred elsewhere. But the main, underlying idea of the department's functions was that it should look after the devotional side of the chapter's life, and that is still the primary feature of the work of the first department. The first vice-president, as having this sort of duty in charge, was sometimes, it is to be feared, looked on by the other members of the chapter as the official dispenser of piety for the group.

A study of Epworth League work prepared by Doctor Berry in 1893 said that the first department "is expected to arrange for the regular prayer meetings of the chapter, and to plan special revival meetings and neighborhood outdoor and cottage services. It looks after the spiritual welfare of the members, inviting those who are interested to join the classes of the church. It conducts children's prayer meetings, or

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

devotional meetings for special classes of persons, as sailors, railroad men, etc. It is expected to help the superintendent in building up the Sunday school. It also endeavors to interest the young people in the missionary enterprises of the church. To it are committed all the evangelistic and devotional activities of the chapter."

All this is written in a confident vein, but it is hardly to be taken as an accurate description of what was actually done by every first department in every Epworth League chapter in those halcyon days almost forty years ago. Rather, it was intended as an outline of the sort of thing that the first department *could* do, provided its vice-president was an up and coming person, and the chapter members were of the grade to respond to the proposal of such a program. Perhaps few, if any chapters, had a first department in which all the things mentioned by Doctor Berry were actually done. But every one of these things was certainly done in some chapter, so that, taking a hint from here and a suggestion from there, the composite became a picture of what the ideal first department of the ideal chapter might do.

You will have noticed that there were at least two things mentioned in this original outline of first-department work which soon passed to the care of other parts of the League organization. The holding of "children's prayer meetings" became a job in itself, out of which grew the Junior Epworth League, with a superintendent of its own, and a place of its own in

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

the chapter. And the interest of the League in missions grew until a whole department was required to look after it adequately.

But as these changes developed, lessening the duties of the first department in one direction, there grew a perception of other things that the League needed to be doing, and that the department of spiritual work might well undertake. So it happened that more attention was focused on personal evangelism, that promotion of the systematic study of the Bible became a more prominent feature of the first vice-president's duties, and that the cultivation of the Morning Watch grew yearly in importance.

3. THE SECOND DEPARTMENT

The second department began as the Department of Mercy and Help, and that, I suppose, was the best-known title in League affairs for many years. It was known because it was unique. Strange as it seems to us nowadays, the idea embodied in the Department of Mercy and Help, when that department was first projected, was almost a new idea among the churches. That there was a place for regular, systematic, well-planned service to the needy in the community came to thousands of godly people as a new idea of church work.

In one way, this very newness was the salvation of the League's second department. Hundreds of young men and women suddenly found themselves, back in those days of the League's youth, vice-presidents in

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

charge of Departments of Mercy and Help. But what were they to do? There were some suggestions offered from headquarters. For instance, Doctor Berry wrote of "systematic visitation of the members of the chapter, the sick of the neighborhood, the aged and newcomers of the community." He spoke of taking an interest in "the charities of the place," and of having charge of "temperance work, social-purity work, and tract distribution." "All kinds of charitable duties," he said, "such as visiting hospitals, nursing, distributing flowers, starting industrial schools, running employment bureaus, coffee houses, day nurseries, etc., are under its care."

That sounds fairly definite. But many a vigorous Epworthian turned loose on a second vice-president's job in the early nineties found it hard to work up a real task from suggestions of this kind. After all, systematic visitation had its limits, and tract distribution was hardly calculated to rouse any wild enthusiasm on the part of a red-blooded young man or woman. Industrial schools commonly require more attention than a Leaguer could give—not to mention experience—and the demand for coffee houses is never far beyond the supply. So these second vice-presidents were forced, in most cases, to hew out a task for themselves. And they did it! "Many wilted bouquets and a lot of thin jelly went to the helpless sick in the name of mercy and help," The Epworth Herald later remarked in reviewing that period. "Yes, but by the solid old method of trial and error a tremendous amount

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

of needed community service that needed doing was also discovered.

As we have already seen, the second department was devoted to other purposes after 1903. In the re-organization that came that year mercy and help was moved over into the third department section, and missions—or World Evangelism, as it was officially called—was made the specific interest of the second vice-president and his committee. This change was significant of the enlargement of outlook that had come to the League during its fourteen years of life. When the League was organized its members were apt to think of religion in very personal terms, not because they were more self-centered than others, but because everybody was thinking of religion in those terms. But a few enthusiasts got behind the promotion of mission study in the League, and kept pushing and booming it until the whole organization became permeated with the missionary spirit and outlook. The rearrangement of departments in 1903 was only the formal acknowledgment of this change in point of view.

Significantly enough, the primary emphasis in this department of world evangelism, when it was first established, was on raising money. It was this department which was given the responsibility for the teaching of the idea of stewardship in relation to money. How faithfully the work was done, thousands who now faithfully administer their income, and who were then young men and women in the League, can testify. It is probable, however, that the systematic promotion

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

of mission study, which the new department undertook under the leadership of a young man named S. Earl Taylor, had even a greater influence on the subsequent course of the church at large. One seriously doubts whether the Centenary Movement would have been possible without the foundation which the League's mission study classes had laid during their years of quiet but ceaseless instruction in the why, how and where of Christian missions.

4. THE THIRD DEPARTMENT

Turn back to the original program for the third department, and you can almost see Bishop Vincent at work, putting that program on paper. For the third department was originally known as the Department of Literary Work, and it was expected to carry on the fine tradition of cultural interest which the Oxford League had established. For years that veteran of the Oxford League of whom we have already spoken, Dr. Robert R. Doherty, was at the head of League third-department activities, and under his administration this part of the League became little less than a Methodist Chautauqua. It might not be such a bad thing if we could support a similar interest to-day!

"The department of literary work," said an early announcement, "aims to encourage the young people in the study of the Scriptures, and to instruct them in the doctrines, polity, history, and present activities of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and of the other denominations of the Church universal, and to give

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

stimulus and direction to general Christian culture. It has charge of all courses of reading and study pursued by the chapter. It may open, whenever practicable, libraries, reading rooms, art rooms, and night schools. It arranges for lectures and literary gatherings, at which members of the chapter and others present essays, papers, talks, debates, etc. It endeavors to extend the circulation of the books and papers of the church, and to do what it can to quicken the intellectual life of its members and the community."

This, too, can be taken as a better description of what it was hoped a third department might do than of what any actual department actually did. But some of this sort of work practically every third department undertook. The study courses, both in the content and meaning of the Bible, in the life and work of the church, and in many other subjects of cultural importance, were prepared year by year, and sold to thousands of students. The publications of the church were bought and read, The Epworth Herald in particular prospering by this support until it had a circulation of 125,000 copies every week.

When we look back over the sort of reading that was included in those study courses which the League's third department promoted during the nineties, we see that there was a real attempt made to do some honest thinking. I have, as I write, the outline of the courses for the first ten years before me. It is interesting to notice what the books were. The first course offered, in 1891, consisted of the New Testament; the *Disci-*

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

pline; Gospel Singers and Their Songs, by Francis D. Hemenway and Charles M. Stuart; *Sister Dora*, by Margaret Lansdale; "Sir Launfal," and other pieces; readings on Methodism from *The Epworth Herald*.

Evidently, however, that was just a starter. Three years later I find books by Dr. James Stalker, the great Scotch theologian; Maud Ballington Booth, whose work in the Salvation Army and later among prisoners has made her name known in every land; Dr. Edwin A. Schell, then the corresponding secretary of the League; Dr. Bradford P. Raymond, president of Wesleyan University, and Dr. D. D. Thompson, editor of the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*. In other years I find among the authors Dr. Orison Swett Marden, the original Dr. Frank Crane; Dr. John W. Butler, son of the man who planted Methodism in India and Mexico; Dr. Marcus Dods, the famous British theologian; Professor Richard T. Ely, pioneer sociologist, and the man whom most of us remember as Bishop Quayle.

There actually was a time—although young Methodists of the present generation may find it hard to believe—when the annual appearance of the new Epworth League study course was looked forward to, not only by the Leaguers, but by the pastors and the mature laity, as a high point in the church's year. One friend of mine has told me of the interest in the Newark Annual Conference, years ago, when a new traveling representative of The Methodist Book Concern appeared with that year's volumes in the League

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

course in his hand. The interest, to be sure, was not alone for the books. The salesman happened to be a member of the Conference, and this was his first attempt at selling books. He had been a presiding elder; now the brethren wondered what kind of a book agent he would make.

"Here, brethren," cried the new salesman, holding aloft a red-bound volume, "here's just the book you've been looking for. *Nature's Miracles*, by Elisha Gray, the great naturalist. Know all about Elisha, don't you? Well, here's Elisha's new book, and it tells you all about the rocks and the stones, the atmosphere and the air!"

There was a good deal more to those early League study courses than atmosphere and air. They were planned, an announcement sent out by the executive committee of the League in 1891 said, to promote "on the intellectual side a knowledge of the Bible, of science, of literature, and of the world at large." No small order! One cannot help wondering whether, now that the jazz lure has begun to pall, and "slow clubs" are making their appearance here and there, there might not be a place in the life of the League for a return to something like the serious study courses of the nineties, in addition to the study that is now being done in biblical and missionary subjects.

5. THE FOURTH DEPARTMENT

They called the fourth department, in the beginning, the Department of Social Work. One hardly knows

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

whether the emphasis was on the "social" or the "work." As a matter of fact, the church was just beginning to realize how large a part of the interest of its young people was concerned with their amusements, and about all that the church had to offer, up to that time, was advice against participating in many of the forms of amusement then—and since then—popular. For example, Bishop Vincent was, as we have said, probably more interested in the affairs of youth than any other Methodist leader of that period. But even Bishop Vincent, when he came to tackle this ticklish problem, fell instinctively into a negative attitude. The best he had to offer was a book whose contents were accurately summarized by its title, *Better Not!* The department of social work was the League's attempt to offer something constructive to the solution of this problem.

As in the Department of Mercy and Help, the workers in the fourth department found it necessary, at the beginning, very largely to blaze their own trail. "To the department of social work," said their instructions from headquarters, "is assigned the important and delightful duty of seeking and receiving new members. It is commissioned to introduce such features as will develop the highest and best social life. It has charge of the social parts of all gatherings. The music of the chapter and its entertainments, other than the literary programs, are under its care. These young workers provide flowers for the pulpit, ushers when needed, and attend to procuring badges, emblems, banners,

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

decorations, etc., and are the custodians of all such effects belonging to the chapter. Picnics, excursions, and the like are naturally under the care of the department."

All of which sounds portentous enough, but when examined closely will not be found to yield a great deal in the way of actual work. So the fourth vice-president was generally left to find out for himself—or, more frequently, for herself—the sort of social needs of which the young people were aware, and then to figure out the sort of efforts which would, by meeting those needs, win the surest response. That was where the "work" part of the department's title came in. A lot of sad mistakes were made in a lot of chapters in the attempt to work out a recreation program, but there was also a lot of valuable experience gained, and a positive contribution made to the total life of the church's young people.

It is, of course, one of those nonstatistical things that can hardly be tabulated, but it is safe to say that the positive work of the fourth department during the first two decades of the League's life not only gave an impulse toward sane and healthy recreation to thousands of young people, but also had an immeasurable influence on the later readjustment in the attitude of the church toward the whole question of amusements.

In the general overhauling of League machinery which took place in 1903 the fourth department came in for a sudden enlargement. Under the pressure to make a place for the department of world evangeliza-

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

tion, the old third and fourth departments were telescoped, to produce a new department of Literary and Social Work. This department has, in the course of time, come to be known as the Department of Recreation and Culture. It is one of the glories of the Epworth League that, from the first, it has worked so consistently at the development of a constructive program in this much-debated field for its members.

6. OTHER CHANGES THAT THE YEARS BROUGHT

At the very beginning of the Epworth League's career a genius invented what became one of the best-known devices in Methodist lore. This device, too, was really an inheritance from Oxford League days, in which organization it had been first used by Mr. Byron E. Helman. Mr. Helman called his figure an "Oxford League Wheel," and the "Epworth League Wheel," which succeeded it, became known far and wide. Mr. Helman wrote a book called *How to Make the Wheel Go*, which was for years the standard manual of League methods. The Epworth Herald carried a similar department under the same heading. "Making the wheel go" came to be the purpose of every good League officer in that period when the country was overrun with cyclists.

The original Epworth League wheel was a very simple affair. It was a circle, divided into six segments. At the hub stood the church pastor and the chapter president. Then each segment was given to the work of a different department. It is safe to say

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

that more Epworthians gained an idea of the divisions of League work from studying the wheel than ever learned the departmental divisions from reading the League constitution.

In 1903, when the departments were rearranged and renamed, the wheel was discarded. In its place appeared the Maltese cross made familiar in the League badge. Each arm of the cross was then made to bear the duties of a department, and the attempt was abandoned to set off the work of the secretary and treasurer as separate departments.

"There's a difference," said Dr. Dan B. Brummitt later, in commenting on this change in devices. "A wheel carries the burden; a cross is itself to be carried. A wheel runs with the minimum of effort; it costs something to take up a cross. A wheel is good for the beaten path; a cross must be borne wherever One goes before who has said, 'Follow me.'"

A more significant change came in the pledge. As we have already seen, some of the organizations that entered the Epworth League exacted exceedingly drastic pledges of their members. When the League was formed it was resolved—again following the practice of the Oxford League—to allow for two types of membership, where any local chapter so desired. There could be an active membership and an associate membership. Where this distinction was made, holding office was to be confined to the active members, who should be required to take this pledge:

"I will earnestly seek for myself, and do what I can

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

to help others attain, the highest New Testament standard of experience and life. I will abstain from all those forms of worldly amusements forbidden by the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and I will attend, so far as possible, the religious meetings of the chapter and of the church, and take some active part in them."

On the whole, this pledge has stood the test of time. The significant change came when the clause concerning amusements was changed, in 1913, to a promise to abstain from "such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus." Surely, this was a more searching test than that in the previous form. It was, moreover, a return to the standard originally set up by John Wesley for the people called Methodists. And it foreshadowed, as we now know, the action that the church as a whole was to take eleven years later.

7. CHANGING LEADERSHIP

One of the difficulties in writing a story of this kind is that, in our hurry from point to point, we must of necessity slight so many matters of interest and persons of importance. We have room here for no more than a brief word concerning the men who were providing leadership for the League during the years while this development in its organization was taking place. Of course this is not an adequate treatment of the contribution that all of them made. But we have intelligence enough to know that, had there not been leadership of the finest order, very few of the

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

achievements that we have listed would have come to pass.

As we have seen, the League started out under the leadership of Dr. Jesse Lyman Hurlbut. Then the General Conference of the church decided, in 1892, that the League needed a secretary of its own, and since Doctor Hurlbut was needed in the Sunday-school work, the place was left vacant for another man. The new secretary was finally found, after one or two false starts, in Dr. Edwin A. Schell, who had been a pastor in Yonkers, New York. Doctor Schell was something of an "unknown" to the church at large when he started his work, but long before he finished his seven years in the place his name had become familiar in every corner of Methodism.

For a few months after the resignation of Doctor Schell the general secretary was Dr. Wilbur P. Thirkield. But when the General Conference of 1900 convened it soon became plain that Doctor Thirkield was wanted for another task—that of guiding the Freedmen's Aid Society—and the Conference then did what seemed to be the inevitable thing. It asked Doctor Berry to combine the duties of the general secretaryship with his editorial work on *The Epworth Herald*. This arrangement continued for four years, when Secretary-Editor Berry became Bishop Berry—and incidentally president of the League—and Dr. Edwin M. Randall was brought from the Northwest to be general secretary. Other men have been in the position since then, but of them we will speak later on.

HOW THE LEAGUE WORKED

How many of you belong to chapters whose charters bear one of these five names—Hurlbut, Schell, Thirkield, Berry or Randall?

8. THE JUNIOR LEAGUE

Perhaps the most apparent omission in what has been written up to this point is the lack of any adequate reference to the growth and influence of the Junior League. We have seen how the original plans for the first department made provision for the conducting of meetings for children. But we have not had the space in which to tell of the way in which it soon became clear that the children would need an organization of their own.

This organization grew in the Junior Epworth League, which sprouted right up along with the senior League almost from the beginning. The Junior League had a "wheel" of its own, also divided into six segments. But where the senior wheel talked about "spiritual work," the junior spoke of "heart"; where the senior spoke of "mercy and help," the junior used "hand"; where the senior used "literary work," the junior said "head"; where the senior said "social work," the junior called it "feet"; where the senior called it "correspondence," the junior wrote "pen," and where the senior wrote "finance," the junior was more graphic with "pocket." Heart; hand; head; feet; pen; pocket—not a bad list of possessions to be cultivated for the purposes of the kingdom of heaven, was it?

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Until 1904 the leader in Junior League work was Mrs. Annie E. Smiley; since then—what Leaguer needs to be told?—the Junior Leagues have been under the direction of Miss Emma A. Robinson.

9. THE LEAGUE AS PROPHECY

More than ten years ago Doctor Brummitt, on that famous "third page" that he used to have in The Epworth Herald, pointed out the number of ways in which the Epworth League, even though it was only a young people's society, had discovered the way in which the church as a whole was later to walk. The most striking examples of this have already been suggested in this chapter. The League did pioneer work for the whole church in awakening an interest in the study of missions, in launching that social service which it called mercy and help, and in providing a positive, progressive program in the realm of recreation.

In each of these things, if you mark what the church is doing, or trying to do, to-day, you can then turn back the pages of League history and find that the League was doing the same thing, or trying to do it, twenty and thirty years ago. It wasn't always succeeding very well, to be sure, but it was trying. And one reason why the church at large is trying to do these same things to-day is because the men and women who make up the church now are the boys and girls who made up the League in those formative years.

Is there no prophetic quality in the League work of this decade?

CHAPTER IV

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

I. THE CHURCH'S TRAINING GROUND

FROM the start the Epworth League has been called a drill ground. That phrase has probably been used in convention speeches describing League work and League aims more often than any other. It is not a perfect description, to be sure. There are many important features of League life that can hardly be regarded as "drill." But it is true that the church as a whole has been glad to give hearty support to the League because it has seen in the League the place where new leaders might be trained for the developing needs of the larger, inclusive organization.

Nobody claims, of course, that the League drill ground has always turned out perfect church leaders and members. There have been some chapters, it is to be feared, in which there was precious little real training given, and others in which the training was far from what it should have been. This will be admitted without dispute. But that does not change the main point, which is simply this—that for almost forty years now the League has been taking boys and girls and turning them into young men and women

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

ready for the heaviest responsibilities of church life. Again and again the church, with a new job to be done, has turned to the League for the needed workers, and again and again the League has met the demand.

One fact about this training work of the League needs to be kept in mind. It does not make it easy to pile up imposing statistics. There are some people who seem to gauge the value of every sort of religious effort or organization by the totals of the statistics which can be compiled. The Epworth League can't go in much for statistics. It has them tucked away about the shop for those who insist on looking at them. And when they are brought out they frequently astonish the investigator. But the League would rather not spend much time with integers and decimals.

The reason is that it takes a settled body to gather imposing totals. And the League is not a settled body. It is hardly a body at all. It is much more a procession. It has doors at both ends, and trained Epworthians are passing out at one end for the larger tasks of the general church as rapidly as the boys and girls are coming in at the other to take their training for future usefulness. In this sense, the League is always losing its life—losing it in a larger life—and so, as the Christian promise has always been, finding it again.

This is a long, and I fear boresome, introduction to what I hope will prove an interesting chapter in this Story of the Epworth League. But it seemed necessary to give this background—this explanation of what

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

the League is in existence to do—before going on to show how the League is always thrusting itself out. And now we are ready to see some of the ways in which this thrusting out process takes place.

2. WHERE THE LEADERS COME FROM

Suppose we manufacture some statistics of our own. If you were to attend the next session of the Methodist Annual Conference which includes your church within its territory, you would find an impressive group of men—the pastors—and perhaps a small, but no less impressive, group of women—the deaconesses—there. Suppose they gave you a chance to make a speech. They are pretty busy, but there do come times when the bishop is away worrying over the appointments and when almost any kind of a speech-maker can have a chance. I know, for I've had some of that sort of chances. Well, suppose that, instead of making a speech, you asked every minister and every deaconess who, before becoming a minister or a deaconess, had been a member of the Epworth League to indicate that fact. How many would raise their hands? I'll tell you. For every 127 ministers, you would find 93 and $\frac{5}{7}$ who were originally Epworthians, and for every 18 deaconesses you would find 13 and $\frac{7}{9}$ who had stepped from that organization into their sisterhood of service.

Do these statistics surprise you? Do you wonder where I got them? I made them up! That's why they are such good statistics. They are just as reliable as

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

most statistics of the sort, and a good deal more impressive than many. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't be surprised if they were nearly true. If you really *did* make that test in almost any Methodist Annual Conference or gathering of deaconesses, I imagine that the result would be about what I have indicated. Drop out of consideration the ministers who were in their work before the League was organized, and the ministers who have come into the Methodist church after spending their youth in some other denomination, and you would find that the Methodist ministry is to-day composed almost solidly of former Leaguers.

"Just seven years ago," somebody wrote to The Epworth Herald a few years ago, "four young men and four young women were on the cabinet of the Washington District League, in the Pittsburgh Conference. One of the boys passed away, after two years of suffering, but not before he had made Christian Stewardship a living ideal for scores of young people. The other three boys are now in the active ministry; one of the young women is an assistant pastor and another is a graduate deaconess. As one of the men puts it, this was a cabinet composed of 'young people under thirty,' and the outcome sketched above is directly traceable to the League's everyday business of giving young people real work to do, with and for their own kind."

That testimony could be matched or surpassed again and again if we had opportunity to gather records from all parts of the country covering the full span

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

of the League's life. It is altogether likely that you could match it in your own district. Undoubtedly you know men and women who are reliable leaders of the church to-day—some of them in the ministry and some as laymen—who first found their chance to show what was in them in the League.

It is stimulating to page back through the files of The Epworth Herald and see how, twenty or more years ago, Methodists who are now known all over the country—and some of them beyond the confines of this country—were first moving into positions of influence in and through the work of the Epworth League. I was trying to find out, in preparing to write this story, when and where the institutes started. I mentioned one answer to a friend. "Yes," he said, "that was the first real institute. But there was a meeting held in Delaware, Ohio, away back in 1901 that had some of the institute ideas in it. You really ought to look that meeting up."

So I looked up the Delaware meeting in 1901, and these are some of the things I found out about it:

It was planned by Doctor Berry, who was then editing The Epworth Herald and acting as secretary of the Epworth League at the same time. It was not meant to be a whoop-'er-up platform convention. The League was growing tired of that sort of thing. This was to be a quiet, serious period for the study of specific problems. To lead in the study Doctor Berry called in several of those who had been in the League from the beginning. Among them were Mr. Willis

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

W. Cooper, one of the founders; Dr. James W. Bashford, then president of Ohio Wesleyan and a persistent figure in League reports of that period; and that remarkable woman, Mrs. Lucy Rider Meyer, the president of the Chicago Training School.

But that, remember, was 1901. The League was twelve years old, and already the procession was under way, and new leadership was being sought. Turn back to those old pages of *The Epworth Herald*. Read the report carefully, and watch that new leadership appear. Here is its first representative. The meeting decides that the League should spend more time on mission study. (The interest in mission study, as we shall have occasion to see again, increased with astonishing rapidity after the opening of the century.) Mission study needs explaining, defending, promoting. And, instead of turning that task over to a veteran, here is the League turning to a young man. Who is the new leader? His name proves to be S. Earl Taylor. That was a good many years before anybody thought of a Centenary Movement!

Young Mr. Taylor carried the Delaware conference by storm. He did it, I find, very largely by calling on his Epworthian friends to back him up. Who were they? Well, the first one mentioned by the *Herald* was named E. D. Soper, "a young fellow," according to the account, "a recent graduate of Dickinson College, and soon to enter Drew Seminary." Then there was a C. V. Vickery, who was spoken of as "a student volunteer who is at present at Drew Seminary." And

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

there was E. T. Colton, who was named but not described at all. I wonder how many of those who were at that Delaware conference had any idea that when these young men spoke they were listening to Methodism's coming authority in the field of comparative religions, or to the man who would direct the Near East Relief in the most gigantic international philanthropy in history, or to the man who would take charge of the work of the Y. M. C. A. in Russia during the demanding years of the World War?

But was that all that Delaware conference uncovered in the line of coming leadership? Not quite. The sessions of the conference do not seem to have been entirely restricted to discussions by the general leaders of the League in those days. There was at least one point in the proceedings when the doors were opened and some local Leaguers were allowed to come in and tell of their plans and achievements. And then, says the Herald, "Mr. R. E. Diffendorfer, president of the Mansfield District, stated that on his district the committee had been working for a year, and had placed some twenty-five missionary libraries in the thirty or more leagues in his district." I wonder if the secretary of our Board of Foreign Missions, traveling about somewhere on the other side of the world as these words are written, remembers that day when he reported what "his district" was doing to spread missionary literature through thirty League chapters in Ohio?

I have told the story of this almost forgotten con-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

ference at some length because it seems to me that, in this way, I can make clear the way in which the Epworth League has constantly been raising up leaders for the church, or has given the new leaders, as they have emerged, a chance for service. Other examples might be quoted, did not the space limits of this book forbid. I cannot, however, resist telling of a single issue of *The Epworth Herald* that I discovered, printed more than twenty years ago. It must have been one of the first issues ever to be given almost entirely to the promotion of mission study.

Who do you suppose contributed the articles? S. Earl Taylor, to be sure. He not only wrote several of the articles, but I suspect that he had much to do with the whole character of that issue. Then in the list of contributors there was a young preacher in Baltimore, by name, Charles E. Guthrie. And there was another young preacher in the little town of Cranford, New Jersey, by name, Lynn Harold Hough. And there was another preacher in Middletown, Connecticut, who had just been elected president of Ohio Wesleyan University, Herbert Welch. And finally there were two young college men who were putting all their enthusiasm into a new enterprise known as the Missionary Education Movement, Morris W. Ehnes and George F. Sutherland.

If you are interested in historical research, and are looking for the "origins" of present-day Methodism, I would advise you to go back into the files of *The Epworth Herald* twenty to thirty years ago.

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

3. THE LEAGUE OVERSEAS

It is not only in the United States that the League has been training the rising generation of Methodists. In many other communities it has done much the same thing. There are regular League organizations in South America, India, Mexico, Malaysia, Germany, and China. Where it has so far been impossible to support special League workers, local calls for young people's societies have, in many other countries, led the missionaries or the pastors to organize bodies to which they have given the League name. Some of these have proved very effective.

If we had room, I might tell the story of all the overseas Leagues. Since we have to hold ourselves within such narrow limits, suppose we take just a brief look at two of these League organizations, one in Asia and the other in Europe.

The Epworth League in India dates back to a chapter of the Oxford League organized by Dr. E. W. Parker, a missionary at Moradabad, in 1888. There seems to have been nothing to distinguish this chapter from the Oxford League in America, except that it had a special department of "Willing Workers," who were pledged to devote at least one evening a week to aggressive missionary work in various parts of the city. When the Epworth League was organized in America, the Moradabad chapter of the Oxford League became the first chapter of the new organization in India.

The Moradabad League soon attracted attention throughout Indian Methodism. Other chapters were

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

organized. Soon they were numbered in the hundreds. When the Central Conference for India met in 1894—that is a body somewhat like the General Conference, but dealing only with Indian problems—it was voted that there should be a national organization, with a Board of Control, a president, and a general secretary. Doctor Parker, soon thereafter to be made Bishop Parker, became this first president, and the Rev. Homer C. Stuntz became the first general secretary. It is interesting to read the list of the general secretaries from that time to this. Beginning with the to-be Bishop Stuntz, there follows the to-be Bishop Warne; then the to-be Bishop J. W. Robinson; then the Rev. W. A. Mansell; then another to-be bishop, Brenton T. Badley; then the Rev. J. R. Chitambar. And when Doctor Chitambar was elected to the presidency of Lucknow Christian College, Dr. E. L. King stepped into this important position, which he still holds.

League work in such a country as India can show little uniformity. Some chapters are closely related to schools; some are located in great city churches; but there are scores of chapters which must carry on their work under the exceedingly simple conditions which prevail in the typical Indian village. The question of "program," therefore, requires a readiness to adapt to an infinite variation in conditions. It might seem that nothing approximating the training work done by American chapters could be accomplished under the conditions which India imposes. It is said,

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

however, that the League there has played exactly the same rôle that it has played in this country.

"The leaders of our Methodist work in India have all come up through the Epworth League," Bishop Badley once said. "I know of no exceptions. J. R. Chitambar, J. Devadasan, N. K. Mukerji, N. Jordan, G. L. Lorenzo, G. H. Thomas, M. C. Singh, G. J. Shaw, M. K. Chuckerbutty, J. Soule, and all the other young men who are *doing things* for Indian Methodism to-day, have been molded by the Epworth League, and, in turn, have shaped it. The younger generation of preachers of our church in India learned the art of public speech in the Epworth League. Take a vote in any Annual Conference in India, and probably three-fourths of all the men under forty-five will testify to the indispensable work done by the Epworth League in training them to speak in public. The League has stamped our preachers in India as nothing else could; it has developed our laymen as no other organization. It has made leaders of men who would otherwise never have been heard of by the church."

Much the same story that has been told concerning the League in India might be told of the League in Germany. There, too, the League came into existence almost as soon as in the United States. It has perhaps gathered added strength in that country from its contacts with Epworthians from the chapters in the German-speaking Methodist churches of America, and from the large amount of literature and other special helps produced in German in this country during the

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

years when there was a special German assistant secretary on the staff at the central office of the League, specially charged with this task.

The World War proved a terrible trial for all the Methodist churches in Germany, and even more for the Leagues. Compulsory military service forced into the ranks of the army practically all the male members of the League. Church work was severely hampered, and after the United States entered the war there were other difficulties in the path of an organization with its headquarters in this country. But, somehow or other, the League managed to survive.

Now, in these postwar years, it begins to appear that the League may become a more important factor than ever before in Germany. For these are years when Germany is being remade, and much of the making is the work of her young people. All kinds of youth movements flourish in Germany to-day. The Epworth League offers the German Methodists a youth movement which may become of vast significance. Already there have been League conventions and gatherings larger and more enthusiastic than any known before the war. Particularly in the new German temperance movement has the potential power of the League been shown. It is probably literally true to-day that the Epworthians of several German cities can stage a larger procession when they want to than could the Epworthians of New York.

And so the tale could be continued. League work in these other lands is not always conducted according

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

to the models we have worked out in this country. "Gerry" Townsend Fitch, the League secretary in China, who became known to so many thousands of Epworthians in the period between 1919 and 1924, told once of a chapter in West China which was almost wrecked because some of the members objected to the president announcing hymns and leading in public prayer. And Miss Robinson, in one of her booklets, tells how the first League in Panama was almost wrecked by its first election of officers. Then, while it was staggering along trying to overcome the effects of the defection of defeated candidates, the treasurer went off with all the funds—and that *did* finish it. But, after a year, it started up again.

4. THE LEAGUE'S OWN MISSIONS

Much more important, perhaps, from the standpoint of the good of the kingdom of God as a whole than these Leagues in other lands have been the entire missions which the League has founded. There have been two of these, and both have been the result of having Epworthians in the United States come to the conclusion that their chapters would not be fulfilling their responsibilities until they projected their influence by maintaining Christian work in other parts of the world.

The first time that happened was in the Pittsburgh Conference. I said something a few minutes ago about the way in which, under the inspiration of S. Earl Taylor, mission study became a major interest

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

in the League in the years immediately following the opening of the new century. One thing which Mr. Taylor did was to search for district second vice-presidents who could get behind a real program of missionary education and effort and push it over. In the Pittsburgh area, however, Mr. Taylor was unusually fortunate. There he found Miss Bessie Brooks, the second vice-president of the Conference League, and she soon showed herself capable of carrying to success a missionary program for all the districts in that important Conference.

In 1904 Miss Brooks, in making the rounds of the annual district conventions, was accompanied by the Rev. John R. Denyes, a missionary who had spent years at work in Malaysia. Mr. Denyes had a dream of a Methodist mission in Java. Such Christian work as had been done in that island had been confined to the Dutch state church. Mr. Denyes saw the possibilities of a mission without government backing or connections, and he passed his idea on to Miss Brooks and the Leaguers of the Pittsburgh Conference.

What happened is history. One district, the McKeesport, felt that its first obligation was to the underprivileged workers in the coke ovens of western Pennsylvania, and put its strength into the support of the famous Coke Mission there. But the other four districts—the Allegheny, the Blairsville, the Washington, and the Pittsburgh—pledged themselves each to give as a special gift, over and above their regular giving, a thousand dollars a year for five years.

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

It was this annual gift of four thousand dollars which sent Mr. Denyes to Java in 1905 as the first American missionary to begin work on that island. The first Methodist church was organized on November 5 of that year. It had one member in full connection—Mrs. Denyes—and six Chinese members on probation, four of them men and two women. And it has been growing ever since, although the cost of supporting this mission long ago reached so high a figure that it had to be undertaken by the regular foreign mission board of the church.

Even more romantic is the story of the mission which the Epworthians of California founded, and have supported, in Panama. This is a matter of much more recent history. It goes back only to 1916. In that year there was a General Conference which met at Saratoga Springs, New York, and did as all General Conferences do—elected bishops. Among the bishops elected was William F. Oldham. Bishop Oldham had been a missionary bishop in Malaysia; then he resigned that post to become secretary of the mission board in New York; in 1916 the church made him a bishop again, and made him responsible for all Methodist work in South America.

Before the Saratoga Springs General Conference adjourned Bishop Oldham sought out a delegate who was there from California. His name was George A. Miller, and he was the pastor of a church in San Francisco. He had been a pastor in Manila at one time, and so spoke a little Spanish.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

"Brother Miller," said Bishop Oldham, in effect, "I want you."

"What for?" asked the surprised Californian.

"I want you to go to Panama and start a Methodist mission at that crossroads of the world!"

That sounded interesting, and Mr. Miller talked about it for a long time with the bishop, and with other friends who were at the Conference. But he found that the bishop not only wanted him to go to Panama, but would expect him to raise the money to take him there and support him after his arrival. And he didn't want to become a money-raiser. So he went back to California without giving a final answer.

Not long after that came the annual institute at Asilomar. It was a great institute that year, with the Epworthians of the Southern Methodist Church joining with their comrades of the North. Doctor Miller, like any good pastor, was there with the delegation from his League. And on the faculty, teaching general League methods, was the editor of The Epworth Herald, Doctor Brummitt. Now we will let Doctor Brummitt continue the story:

"On Thursday morning I was complimenting these capable young Californians on the scope of their League work. Said I, 'You seem to be doing, and doing well, all that Epworthians should do, except one thing; you are doing nothing for any cause outside your own Conference. Why don't you tackle a really sizeable and completely self-forgetting job?'

"That afternoon a League officer came to me and

THE LONG ARM OF THE LEAGUE

asked: 'What did you mean by what you said? Did you mean Miller?'

" 'I didn't mean any one particular person or thing,' I said; 'and certainly not Miller. What about Miller, anyway?'

"Then the story of the Panama appeal was rehearsed. I had not heard it before. It seemed a good opening, so I told my informant. 'Not knowing all this, I couldn't have intended this morning to suggest California's support of Brother Miller. But I'll do it now. Why *not* mean Miller?'

"The idea began to spread. All day Friday it passed from group to group. On Friday night there was an abalone chowder party down on the beach, with everybody feasting riotously on chowder, pickles, coffee, and the inescapable sand. In the intervals of eating and innocent roystering, people talked about Miller and Panama.

"Saturday's hour deepened the impression that the thing could be done. At night a group of us, Miller in the center, walked the edge of the surf and talked and prayed. Miller was not yet entirely clear in his conviction that he must answer the call. But the others relieved him of his greatest hesitation—the financing of the work. They said, 'We know where the money can be found.'

"About nine o'clock I said to the group: 'Keep on praying and talking until you see light. I think I see a gleam already, and I'm going up to headquarters to get ready for the offering to-morrow.' For I felt

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

that the affair was working out as it should. And I had what seemed to me to be a bright idea about the 'financial effort,' as dedicators airily term it.

"No map of the Panama Canal could be found at the bookstand. So, on a great blackboard I drew a map from memory, not that I had ever been at Panama, but I knew how it ought to look. Since the Canal is about fifty miles long, I marked it off in one-mile lengths. We must get a total of one thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars as a starter—which made each mile represent twenty-five dollars. Then, in the serene consciousness of being prepared, I went to bed."

Well, I wish there were space to repeat all the rest of the story as Doctor Brummitt tells it. How the Southern Methodists insisted on paying for the first four miles of Mr. Miller's trip through the Canal; how the young people who were giving up their pastor asked for the next four miles; and how the subscriptions came pouring in until the new missionary was not only through the Canal, but was forced to take a side-trip into Costa Rica—where, as the amazing fact was later to develop, he did go, after two years in Panama, to open still another mission. But you can fill in the details for yourself. And when you have the picture complete you will have another example of the way in which the League has constantly been projecting its power and life into other parts of the earth.

And Miller? Oh, yes, if you should wonder what became of him, a letter addressed to Bishop George A. Miller, Mexico City, might bring some information.

CHAPTER V

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

I. WHILE THE BOOM WAS ON

HAVE you ever lived in a boom town? Two years ago the State of Florida was in the midst of a tremendous boom. People were climbing into Fords in every part of the country and starting for that newly appreciated "promised land." Almost all the solid ground in the State was being staked out in building lots, and men were actually selling property that was still under water and would have to be brought to the surface with a dredge. Fortunes were being made overnight. Every man, woman, and child you met talked in terms of millions. The very air seemed to tingle. It was great—while it lasted.

Well, the Epworth League had its boom period. I have tried to tell how the League came into existence as a consequence of a rediscovery on the part of the church of the value of its youth. The boom that followed was much like the boom that the newspapers say is on at the moment these words are written out in Nevada. Out there a couple of high-school boys are said to have discovered a remarkably rich gold lode near a spot which was mined years ago, and abandoned as worked out. The inevitable gold rush has

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

followed. So, in 1889 and the years following, the church found in its young people a new lode of high-assay ore. And the enthusiasm of that discovery led to what was probably the greatest "boom" period American Methodism ever knew.

Out of this boom period came the great conventions. It is likely that you have heard of those conventions. Some bearded and rheumatic antiquarian, say about forty-five years of age, has wandered into your chapter meeting, or your institute, and looked you over with a dour and disappointed eye.

"What, ho!" you have cried. "Isn't this all right, old timer?"

"Perhaps; perhaps; all right in its way," he has conceded with a sigh. "But you should have seen back at Detroit in 1903 . . ."

Well, there was something worth seeing in Detroit in 1903. Sometimes one suspects that the permanent value of those great conventions of the boom days was not as great as it might have been. But, for what they were expected to be, and for what they actually were, they were certainly the most impressive thing of the kind our church has ever known. And you cannot tell the Story of the Epworth League without talking about them.

2. THE GREAT CONVENTIONS

All of the five organizations that had united to form the Epworth League held annual conventions. With the birth of the League these conventions went right

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

on, and many of them go on to-day. First of all, as was natural, there came the annual district conventions. There are a few districts which can show an unbroken record of these running back without a break to the days of the founding of the Oxford League. Then there came the Annual Conference conventions, which have generally, in the course of the years, been transformed into the League "rally" held during the session of the Annual Conference. A few State League organizations have been formed, and have held State conventions. And all these gatherings of smaller units led, in the days when the League boom was on, inevitably to the biennial international conventions.

"International Epworth League Convention!" There's a name to conjure with, isn't it? That sounds like something. And it *was* something! When the series of those conventions started, the "international" was more of a hope than an actuality. There were, to be sure, League chapters in Canada as well as in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, when the first international convention met in 1893. But it was not until near the end of the series that the League could be thought of as a truly international organization.

One of the most significant—and let us trust prophetic—features of those conventions was that from the start they included the Epworthians of the Southern Methodist Church as well as of the Northern. It is beyond estimate as to how much of the impetus toward reunion between the two branches of Episcopal

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Methodism in the United States has come from the contacts and comradeships developed in the international League gatherings. But as leadership in the two denominations has passed into the hands of those who were in these intimate convention fellowships of two or three decades ago, the question has been bound to arise: If we could get together there, why not everywhere?

The first of the international conventions, as has been said, came in 1893. The League was only four years old, but, as Bishop Berry titled the book in which the story of that period was told, they had been "*Four Wonderful Years*," and there was a pressing demand for a general get-together. Fittingly enough, Cleveland was chosen as the place for holding that first convention, and the sessions developed quite naturally into a review of the great events that had taken place there four years before when the League was born.

There were many difficulties in the way of that first convention. It was the summer of the Chicago World's Fair, and young people were saving their vacation money to visit that mammoth exposition. The program had to be assembled in somewhat of a hurry, and the League organization was still imperfect enough, in some sections, so that there was little help in working up delegations. But, in spite of all that, about five thousand delegates went to Cleveland, and the impact of the session was felt throughout the church.

Looking back, one finds some familiar names on the

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

program of that "first international." The address of welcome was delivered by the governor of Ohio, a Methodist named William McKinley. Among the speakers were Bishop FitzGerald, Bishop Warren, Bishop Fowler, Dr. (now Bishop) Collins Denny of the Southern church, President Raymond of Wesleyan, Dr. Henry C. Jennings, Bishop Ninde, Dr. Louis Albert Banks, Chaplain McCabe. How many of those names mean anything to the present generation of Epworthians? Perhaps the most interesting session was the one in which the men who had participated in the meeting when the League was formed came back and "reminisced" concerning that event. And probably the most exciting was the long night debate in which the League decided that, if the gates of the Chicago World's Fair were to be opened on Sunday, the League exhibit there should come out.

3. CHATTANOOGA—TORONTO—INDIANAPOLIS

Two years later the League did a bold thing. It took its convention to the South. There was no convention hall available large enough to accommodate the throngs, so it erected a tent in Chattanooga, Tennessee, large enough to hold eleven thousand people, and there it held its second convention. The veterans delight to tell still of the way in which Southern hospitality rose to care for the more than twelve thousand Epworthians who rolled in on the little Tennessee city.

The outstanding thing about that Chattanooga convention was simply the fact that it was held in the

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

South. It was still only thirty years since the close of the Civil War. The wounds were still felt in many places. But to have these young people, North and South, coming together in this way in this place seemed a portent of peace and real national unity to people even outside the Methodist ranks. "Never since the day when American Methodism was divided," said Chaplain McCabe of Libby Prison fame, "has there been such a gathering in the South. It means that the young people are going to reconstruct the world."

The Chattanooga convention witnessed the first use of a song that was to become a "feature" of League conventions for years. This was, "When the roll is called up yonder." There was something about the sentiment, or the music, or both, that seemed to hit the delegates just right. They sang it in some sessions for twenty minutes without intermission. They sang it sitting, standing, marching, waving their handkerchiefs, doing every imaginable thing. Try to think of them doing that out there in a roasting circus tent on a July afternoon and perhaps you can understand why the Nashville Christian Advocate—the "official" organ of the Southern church—in commenting on the convention feared that it was marked by a lack of reverence.

Toronto, in 1897, brought what might be called the first of the "boom" conventions. By that time the railroads were beginning to see the possibilities in this Epworthian host, and the absence of governmental regulations in those days made it possible for them to run

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

excursions to the Canadian city at astonishingly low rates. As a result, Toronto was swept over by a multitude that reached almost twenty-five thousand. The League, it should be remembered, by that time was claiming a million and three-quarters members.

There were not many aspects of the Toronto convention different from any well-conducted convention. The crowd was so large that simultaneous sessions had to be held in several different places—a stratagem that was employed at all the later gatherings as well. There was a telegram of greeting from the man who had opened the first international convention, now President of the United States. And, in reading the story of the convention, I find this reminder of a day that is now gone: "The wheelmen and wheelwomen had two very successful runs on Friday and Saturday mornings, holding sunrise prayer meetings at High and Reservoir Parks. At the latter place those present formed a circle around the reservoir and, claspings hands, sang, 'Shall we gather at the river?'"

Then came Indianapolis in 1899. It was the tenth year of the League's life. There were 19,453 chapters enrolled in the Northern church, and it was claimed that 20,000 delegates came to the Indiana city. Evidently, however, the attendance was something of a disappointment, for The Epworth Herald said that "the era of mammoth conventions has passed." The circus tent was again used to hold the largest meetings. And there was considerable criticism of the long-windedness of many of the speakers.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Do you want a suggestion of what some of those conventions were like? Listen to this, as it appears in *The Epworth Herald* of those days:

At Tomlinson Hall occurred the most remarkable religious meeting we ever attended. Dr. W. F. Wilson and Dr. J. W. Hamilton, and Dr. J. F. Goucher made the missionary addresses. . . . Missionary zeal was kindled anew in many hearts, and the result must be beneficent. At the close the multitude united in singing the old missionary hymn, "From Greenland's icy mountains." Then Bishop FitzGerald and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, took hold.

The two hours which followed were wonderful, wonderful. The bishop made a striking address. Then followed a season of silent prayer. "Now," said the venerable man, "we will turn this meeting loose." Well, the meeting did get loose, and no mistake. Songs echoed through the room. Testimonies came up from the front. They rolled down from the galleries. They echoed from the big choir. Two at a time. Three at a time. Five at a time. But the hall was so large there was no confusion of sound.

Sometimes the singing would start in the farthest gallery. In a moment the multitude would catch up the strain and instantly lift it into a mighty anthem. Shouts broke out on every side—not shallow shouts produced by mere excitement, but shouts literally compelled by the incoming of the Holy Spirit. He seemed to possess the people. It was Pentecost come again.

Thus the meeting swept on for nearly two hours. Then Mr. Black led in his inspiring song, "When the roll is called up yonder." While we sang the multitude was melted. Tears streamed from hundreds of eyes. When the chorus was reached for the last time four

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

thousand handkerchiefs were flung out and waved in triumph above the heads of the happy people. What a sight! Waves of joy swept over us—waves which inundated the singing hundreds. Then came a season of handshaking which lasted half an hour—handshaking to the time of the songs which came from all parts of the hall.

That was in 1899.

4. SAN FRANCISCO—DETROIT—AND LATER

In 1901 the League took another chance by holding its convention on the Pacific Coast. While the railroads were still ready to do their best by the young people, the cost of transportation made a large convention seem out of the question. Yet seventeen thousand delegates registered! And the convention idea seemed once more to take a firm grip on the imagination of the church.

The San Francisco convention stressed the idea of the new century. It pounded home the question, "What is the League to be in this twentieth century?" The general feeling of elation which pervaded all the sessions made all in attendance confident that it would be something pretty important. President McKinley, Vice-President Roosevelt, and the governors of eight States recognized the importance of the gathering by sending greetings. And the roll was called up yonder on every possible occasion.

It was at this San Francisco convention that the passion for missions first really took hold of the League. A huge banner, filling the front of the prin-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

cial convention hall, proclaimed: "Our Chief Aim—Missions." And the course of the convention was so charted as to make that claim in large measure a reality.

What was probably the largest of all the international conventions came at Detroit in 1903. In fact, so great were the crowds that they, in themselves, constituted the most important feature. It was at this convention that "When the roll is called up yonder" reached its apotheosis, traffic in Detroit being suspended at two o'clock one afternoon so that the Epworthians could jam themselves in the streets about the city hall and roar out their triumph-song.

Detroit seems to have had one trouble particularly its own—the failure of speakers to show up. A typical comment in the *Herald* says: "A mighty multitude gathered at Tent Ontario long before the hour for beginning the evening program. The attraction to many was Rev. R. J. Campbell, Joseph Parker's successor as pastor of the City Temple, London. But Mr. Campbell was not forthcoming. So far as could be learned, he had broken his contract to speak before a gathering of unusual importance in order to devote his energies to finding some strayed baggage. The audience was plainly disappointed, not to say disgusted."

There is not space in which to speak at length of the international conventions held in Denver in 1905, in Seattle in 1909, and in Buffalo in 1914. The Denver convention was the last held in the good old days of the cheap railroad rates, for by 1905 President

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

Roosevelt was beginning to get his regulatory program under way. There was another crowd of about fifteen thousand at the Colorado city, and the program was notable for the appearance of new names. The men and women who had been doing most of the speaking since the early nineties were beginning to drop out.

Just as an indication of the sort of thing Epworthians were thinking about in 1905 it is of interest to run back over the resolutions which the Denver convention adopted. The first commended the Lord's Day Alliance to the support of members of the League. The second was a general reaffirmation of allegiance to the temperance movement, including the boast that "the Methodist Episcopal Church is the greatest and most efficient temperance agency in the world," and indorsing the Anti-Saloon League. The third advocated a single social standard. The fourth protested against the admission of Reed Smoot, of Utah, to the United States Senate. (Mr. Smoot, a Mormon elder, is probably the most important member in that body to-day.) The fifth protested against the sale of beer, wine, and spirits in army canteens. The sixth called for uniform divorce laws. The seventh supported a bill forbidding the interstate transport of liquor. The others were of a local nature.

By the time the eighth international convention was held in Seattle in 1909 a new element had come into League life which was destined to do away with the general mass convention. Many League leaders suspected this at the time, and all knew it after the con-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

vention held in Buffalo in 1914. That Buffalo convention was held in July, as most of the international gatherings were. It emphasized the international aspect of the League, and never dreamed that already, in a little Bosnian town, a mad young student had, with a pistol shot, laid fire to a fuse that would, within a few weeks thereafter, explode the powder magazine of the world. A world was passing as the Buffalo convention met. It passed for the League, as well as for every other institution. There are no international conventions in the League's post-war world. But the modern Leaguer claims there is something better. And that, of course, is the Institute.

5. THE RISE OF THE INSTITUTES

I have already spoken of the gathering of League leaders held at Delaware, Ohio, in 1901, in which the idea of training for specific tasks first was emphasized as the work of the League. By the time the great convention was held in Denver, in 1905, this appears to have been a growing idea in many parts of Epworthiana. In the autumn immediately following the international convention a pastor in Denver, Dr. Christian F. Reisner, who was generally regarded as the outstanding League leader of that General Conference district, called a meeting of leaders which remained in session for two November days in Kansas City. He named that gathering an institute. The addresses had to do with such concrete problems as, "The Purpose of the District League," "Systematic Giving,"

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

"Should Money Be Pledged at Conventions?" "Should Pastors Accept the Position of District President?" The speakers, instead of being the former platform "inspirationalists," were actual League workers, such as General Secretary Randall, Doctor Brummitt, and Miss Robinson.

In the meantime the Leaguers in the Pittsburgh and Michigan districts were conducting summer training schools in League methods, and district Institutes were becoming quite common. The League Handbook in 1906 contained the first reference to these Institutes, and differentiated them from the conventions in this fashion: "There is a broad distinction between a convention and an institute. The Annual Conference and the international gatherings should be conventions. They should consist of a series of mass meetings with rapturous choruses, thoughtful papers, and great addresses. The object should be chiefly inspirational. On the other hand, the district meeting should be an Institute. While not lacking in spiritual and inspirational features, it should be chiefly a school for face-to-face, heart-to-heart drill in methods of Christian service, in addition to the study of themes which are closely identified with the Epworth League departments, while the fundamentals of such life and work must be emphasized and illustrated."

While this development was taking place on the districts an even more significant experiment was being planned in the League's central office. Secretary Randall was by this time wholly convinced that the

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

League's future, now that the boom days were over, must lie in the systematic, never-let-up training of workers. For this reason he swung the whole power of the League into the discovery of the sort of training-convention that we know to-day as the Institute.

Doctor Randall made his great experiment in the summer of 1906. He went back to the Des Plaines camp grounds, just outside Chicago, where the Young People's Methodist Alliance had been formed twenty-three years before. There he proposed to hold a training school, under central office auspices, in all departments of League work. There was some hesitation among the good brothers who controlled the camp ground over letting the young Methodists come on it for any such purpose, and when the lease was finally signed it contained the stipulation that no games or other recreational features should be permitted. So Doctor Randall dickered with the farmer whose land adjoined the camp ground, and, after paying him for his crop, turned his corn field into the first Institute play-field. There is a story to the effect that the League secretary dug up three hundred dollars out of his own pockets for the privilege of cutting down that corn and playing volley-ball there. Whether that is a legend founded on fact or not I cannot say.

There were a lot of interesting names on the faculty of that first Institute. There was, fittingly enough, Bishop Berry. Then, President Thomas Nicholson, of Dakota Wesleyan; Professor F. C. Eiselen, of Garrett Biblical Institute; Dr. Don S. Colt, of Baltimore; Dr.

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

J. W. Duncan, an Indiana district superintendent; Dr. P. A. Baker, head of the national Anti-Saloon League; Dr. Christian F. Reisner; Professor Doremus A. Hayes, of Garrett; Dr. W. O. Shepard, then a district superintendent in Chicago and soon thereafter to become Bishop Shepard; Mr. L. Wilbur Messer, general secretary of the Chicago Y. M. C. A.; Miss Isabella Horton, famous Chicago deaconess; Miss Robinson, and Doctor Randall.

That first Institute took in the entire United States as its territory! There were actually Epworthians registered from as far away as New York, Kansas, Ohio, and Iowa! And there were two volunteers for foreign missionary service in the first life-work meeting!

One central office Institute in 1906. Three in 1907. Six in 1908. There the number of "regular" Institutes stood for awhile. Doctor Randall held that the way to conduct Institutes was by having a fixed faculty which could be moved from Institute to Institute, so that work of equal value could be offered in each place. There was a good deal to be said for that idea, but it naturally limited the number of Institutes to the handful that one set of faculty members could reach in the course of a summer.

But the Institute idea had by this time taken hold to such an extent that the half-dozen Institutes the central office of the League was promoting were not enough. So, naturally, "independent" Institutes began to spring up in many parts of the country. I find that

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

one of them was held in the Valley Camp by the Pittsburgh Conference in the same year that the Des Plaines Institute started the "regular" gatherings. On the faculty were people such as George F. Sutherland, Miss Carrie Barge, Dr. H. H. Meyer, Professor E. D. Soper, Bishop W. F. Oldham, Dr. J. R. Denyes, of Java; Mr. J. Campbell White, and Dr. D. G. Downey. Wouldn't an Institute in these days think it had done something if it could announce a faculty like that!

6. THE INSTITUTE IDEA TAKES HOLD

In 1911, the last summer during which Doctor Randall was the general secretary of the League, there were 6 central office Institutes. How many Epworthians attended them we have no way of knowing. The next year there were 8; the next, 12; the next, 18; the next, 19; the next, 30; the next, 33; the next, 44; then came 1919, with the war over, and 58 Institutes. In 1920, 75; in 1921, 87; then the big jump in 1922 to 107! The average now is about 140 Institutes each summer, with more than 30,000 Epworthians in attendance! That, if you figure the thing out, means that about one young Methodist in every twenty is getting this intensive, specialized training every summer!

By that I do not mean to suggest that thirty thousand fully trained church workers are being turned out in the Institutes every summer. There are plenty of young people who go to the Institute for a week of vacation, and who, when there, are far too interested

GREAT DAYS IN LEAGUE LIFE

in the recreational features provided to give much attention to anything else. Regulations may require their presence at some classes, but while their bodies may be present their thoughts are distinctly elsewhere. But that is no cause for discouragement. There are colleges in which at least a few of the students are suspected of being less than enthralled in their classroom work!

No; I don't want to make impossible claims for the Institutes. But there are some things that I think can be said about them. For one thing, they probably cost the church less for what they accomplish than any other promotional or educational device the church ever used. They are largely self-supporting. If you figure that each attendant spends at least ten dollars—and for a week or ten days of vacation, with travel, cost of textbooks, cost of outing clothes, cost of hot dogs, and all the other incidental expenses, ten dollars is likely to be almost ten dollars too small an average—you have at least three hundred thousand dollars spent by the young people of Methodism each year to provide themselves with instruction in Christian living and working!

In the second place, the Institutes are constantly swinging away from superficial, "crowd" features, and are more and more concentrating on real, honest-to-goodness study. The big institute, which was really just a mob of eight or nine hundred youngsters out for a lark, is rapidly becoming passé. Smaller Institutes with harder study is the motto to-day. I would not be

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

surprised to hear of a drop in enrollment before long. It will not be an unmitigated disaster if that takes place, even though we Methodists do like to keep our statistics up.

In the third place, however great the shortcomings may have been, I doubt whether there has ever been an Institute held that did not have something of lasting value to offer any of the young people who were really looking for it. The result has been that, with all the giggling girls and the haw-haw boys, the sheiks and the shebas, and now and then, let it be confessed, the amateur faculty members, hundreds of young people have actually found themselves facing the vital demands of life at the Institutes, and have there reached decisions that have controlled all their futures.

You will notice that I have not tried to describe an Institute. I have not because it seemed like such a useless thing to do. You who read this book—if I can be optimistic enough to hope that somebody actually will read this book—know the Institute too well to allow anybody else to tell you about it. For the Institute to-day is, in a real sense, you. You make it what it is. I hope that you are making it something permanent; something solid; something that will last long after the enthusiasm of this Institute “boom” period has passed. The big convention had just about twelve years of glory. The Institute has been the biggest thing on the League map now for just about twelve years. What of the future?

CHAPTER VI

THE LEAGUE TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

I. THE LEAGUE AS IT IS

SOME of us, as we read of the days of the great conventions, the days when the chapter roll of the League was doubling in a year, the days when the circulation of *The Epworth Herald* was the wonder of religious journalism, find ourselves in danger of sighing for the good old days. It seems as though the League had settled down to a steady pace—fast enough, perhaps, for a long race, but not very exciting. We are young, and we like fireworks. We would welcome another boom.

That feeling is natural enough, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that we may see another boom period before long. There have been a few stirrings among young people here and there that are not without their hints in that direction. This "youth movement" talk you hear about may not be all talk. But we need to guard against letting our emotions—our natural love of excitement—distort our judgment. Things may not be happening in spectacular fashion in the League just now, but things are happening just the same. And they are important things.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

Year by year, the full program of the League, in all its four departments, is being restudied, revalued, remapped for the purpose of adapting it to the needs and desires that lie at the moment in the minds of young people. The Institutes came in answer to such a clearly felt need. So have many other distinctive features of the recent League program. As, for instance, Win-My-Chum Week.

The League has always emphasized the necessity of personal work on the part of its members. But this had been more or less sporadic, more or less artificial. Soon after Doctor Sheridan became general secretary of the League he found himself at a State convention in Montana. The president of the State body told him of plans that were under way to have a week of prayer in all the Montana chapters as a preparation for the next winter's program. Doctor Sheridan gave his hearty approval, and then asked if there might not be more real preparation in transforming the meetings for prayer into meetings for definite personal evangelistic work with the acquaintances of the chapter members. The young people at the convention leaped at the idea. Win-My-Chum Week was born right there. Doctor Sheridan brought it from Montana back to the central office. The Epworth Herald passed it on to the League at large. And you know the rest of the story.

Or take the League's mission interest. We have already seen how, twenty or more years ago, young men named S. Earl Taylor and Ralph E. Diffendorfer,

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

with the help of older men such as that college president, James W. Bashford, developed the initial mission study interest within the League. Along about the time of the World War these same men, with others whom they had enlisted, were ready for another forward step in the promotion of missions. That step proved to be the Centenary.

The Centenary brought the missionary interest of the League to a hotter flame than ever. Back in the days of Secretary Randall the League had first undertaken to support a regularly salaried secretary in another country. His name was Brenton T. Badley; his field was India; we have already seen some of the results of his work. The days of the Centenary saw a determination to enlarge this "young people's work for young people" overseas. We have already seen what this led to in Mexico, South America, Germany, Malaysia, China. But how was this work to be financed? The answer came, in the days when Dr. Charles E. Guthrie was general secretary, in the Twenty-Four-Hour-Day Leagues.

The general plan of the Twenty-Four-Hour-Day Leagues is too well understood by the present generation of Epworthians to need any explanation here. And if this should fall into the hands of one who does not know what this plan is, a two-cent postage stamp, judiciously expended in the general direction of the Central Office, will quickly lighten his darkness. It needs to be said, however, that had it not been for such Leagues during the past few years the general

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

work of the League must have almost gone out of existence.

2. LIFE SERVICE

More important than either of the two features of new League developments mentioned is the new interest in life-work problems. Here, too, is an important part of the modern League which is a direct result of the pressure of new conditions on young Methodists. To some extent the life-work feature is an outgrowth of the Centenary. When the Centenary first placed before the church its hugely expanded figures as to the number of workers who must be set to work before the church could feel that it was in any adequate way discharging its responsibilities, it became immediately clear that this involved not only the question of raising more money, but even more that of securing more workers.

The thing that happened then was, perhaps, to have been expected. Earnest men and women started out everywhere in the church to secure pledges of life service. Appeals for such pledges were made in all sorts of meetings and under all sorts of conditions. Pledge cards were passed out indiscriminately. Many of these cards were so loosely worded that it was hard to tell just what they committed the signer to. There were altar meetings, conducted in such an atmosphere of surcharged emotion that rational consideration was impossible, in which everyone who responded to the altar call was put down as a prospective minister or

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

deaconess or home or foreign missionary worker of some kind. Every imaginable sort of thing was done to pile up "life service pledges." The poor, unfortunate man who was finally saddled with the job of trying to dig some actual workers out of those names on the pledge cards told me that, out of the thousands and thousands turned in, there was only a very small percentage that could be regarded as available. There were girls of six signed up as prospective ministers and men past eighty enlisting for the foreign field!

As was sure to be the case, the Epworth League was expected to produce the larger part of these life-service recruits, and the Institutes became the place of all places where the call for such decisions was made. Frequently, this proved to be just the time to make that call, and the purposes so formed carried young men and women into careers of unselfish service at home or abroad where they have found rich rewards for their devotion. The secretary of the foreign missionary board recently said that by far the greater part of the missionaries commissioned by the church in the last half dozen or more years have come out of the Institutes, and that never has the quality been higher.

There have been two great dangers in this new department of League work, and with both the League has been dealing as wisely as it could. The first has been the danger that Christian life service would come to be interpreted only in terms of the ministry or the foreign missionary field or some other vocation with a place on the church's pay-roll. The way in which such

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

a mistaken notion as that might lead to the belief that there was nothing sacred about any other line of work, so that practices and ideals were to be accepted in a "secular" task which would be out of place in a "sacred" calling, is plain. And now the League, when it talks life-work, is trying only to help its members to find precisely the sort of work for which their talents are best adapted. Its emphasis is now on the investment of life everywhere as a sacrament.

The other danger from the promiscuous appeal has been in the disappointment which might be brought to hundreds who might be moved to volunteer for tasks beyond their powers. There is no more exacting, highly specialized work in the world to-day than that of the foreign missionary. On every mission field the call now is, "Not more, but better missionaries." And every responsible mission board now requires of its recruits preparation and personal endowments of the most unusual sort. To some degree the same thing is true of the ministry. So that, when it comes to seeking new recruits for the manning of the church's staff, the League is increasingly careful. It is no longer anxious for imposing totals. It is making the whole matter of recruiting more and more one of personal study, personal approach, and personal continued counsel and guidance.

3. PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Another development of the modern League, so quiet that it has gone unnoticed by many, but of vast

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

importance, is the increase in the importance attached to the work of the third department. The social service aspect of the League has gone far beyond the place where it consists mainly of calling on a few shut-ins and providing the flowers for the pulpit. There is a definite period given to the study of some definite social problem in almost every League every year. The Leaguers may not always recognize it as that, but that's what it is. But the most hopeful feature of this awakened interest in the social aspects of Christianity is the movement toward trying to practice the principles involved in terms of local community need.

To-day there is under way in many Leagues an attempt to conduct the League in terms of community service. There are chapters which are trying to see what it would mean to live as a follower of Christ should in their towns, and trying to discover definite tasks for Christian servants to perform right at home. They are having some remarkable experiences doing this, and these experiences will soon be placed at the disposal of the entire League. It is altogether possible that the next step in League life will be the turning of all chapters to this finding of definite Christian "projects," and the devotional meetings will become places for discussion of the degree of success with which these projects are being carried out.

4. CHANGES IN LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

There isn't much in these pages about the League organization, as such. We are not here particularly

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

interested in the machine as a machine. It is the outcome of the machine's work that we are trying to study. But we know that there is a machine there. And perhaps, just to understand where the League stands at present, we would do well to glance briefly at some of the changes that have come to the machine.

As a matter of fact, these changes have not been many. In the local Leagues, as we have seen, there were four departments at the start, and there are four departments to-day. There have been some readjustments in the names and functions of the departments, to be sure, due to changing interests among young people, but the main outline of a local chapter remains about as it was in 1889. So with the general organization. It is true there have been some changes, but these are more what the automobile makers call "refinements in body design" than anything else. Like the Ford car, the Epworth League is, basically, just about what it was thirty-eight years ago.

If we study the general League organization in terms of personalities, we see Doctor Randall passing over the responsibilities of the general secretaryship to Doctor Sheridan in 1912. Then we see Doctor Sheridan carrying on magnificently during the years of the great Institute expansion and the birth of the Win-My-Chum movement and all the rest until he is struck down by disease. Then in steps a leader who has won his spurs in the Institutes—Dr. Charles E. Guthrie. Doctor Guthrie is in charge throughout the expanding Centenary period.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

It is while Doctor Guthrie is secretary of the League that a change of some significance takes place. The League becomes a regular benevolent board. This will probably mean nothing to most young Epworthians. But to the League it meant that the time when the League was left by the church to finance its own program was past. From this time the church undertakes to finance the League from the same benevolent budget that finances the Board of Foreign Missions, or that of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals. For a time this looks as though a burden was to be taken off the young people—who are notoriously “broke” most of the time—but when the benevolent funds of the church begin to drop off it is found that this leaves the League with less to operate on than it had in the past.

It is now (1927) seven years since the church made the Epworth League a regular benevolent board. Then, three years ago, at the General Conference of 1924, the church changed the status of the League still again. The aim of the church was to concentrate in one body all the agencies that had anything to do with the education or training of the church's young people. This general body was given the broad title of Board of Education, and the Epworth League, along with the church schools and all the similar bodies, naturally became a part of this general board. A department, it is called. But it is still the Epworth League.

Doctor Guthrie remained as secretary until 1924. Then Dr. Blaine E. Kirkpatrick stepped into the job.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

I might try to tell something about the way in which he has handled it but for the fact that this manuscript is likely to undergo his scrutiny, and I know that he would bring his secretarial blue pencil into action. At the same time, in 1924, Leaguers said good-by to another long-loved friend when Dr. Dan B. Brummitt left the editorship of The Epworth Herald to become editor of the Northwestern Christian Advocate. The Herald to-day is being edited by Dr. W. E. J. Gratz, another Institute-Central Office veteran, with the assistance of the Rev. T. Otto Nall. Again, I am in a quandary as to what to say about them, because they will both see these words before they appear in print. And since you who read this read The Epworth Herald too, why should I say anything? You know as well as I do what sort of paper it is.

5. FOUR KINDS OF LEAGUES

One of the interesting recent developments in League life has been the appearance of four separate age groups. The League has had, almost from the beginning, two age groups. There have been the League and the Junior League. One of the most obvious shortcomings of this story (which, alas! has all too many and too obvious a collection of shortcomings) is the lack of frequent reference to the work of the Junior League.

In the last few years, however, there has come to be a general feeling that two age groups did not quite meet the situation. Now there are four such groups,

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

and I hear whispers that there may some day be five. In the 1927 model Epworth League there are the Juniors, ranging from nine to eleven in age; the Intermediates, from twelve to fourteen; the High Schoolers, from fifteen to seventeen; and the Young People, containing all those above the eighteen-year mark. If a fifth group comes, it is likely to be recognized in the chapters composed largely of college students. Separate topics and topic treatments are now being provided for all these groups.

The League is also learning to co-operate with other departments in the life of the church as never before. This is not only true in regard to the educational program of the colleges and church schools, but it is true in many other directions. During the present year, for example, the third departments of the Leagues have been largely responsible for arousing interest in the national young people's prohibition oratorical contest arranged by the Board of Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals. In many cities the work of the Goodwill Industries has been greatly helped by co-operation afforded by the same departments. And in a State like Kansas the hospitals of the church have been enabled to give thousands of dollars' worth of free service because of the supplies collected through the League booth festivals.

There is, likewise, increasing co-operation with bodies outside our own denomination. Complete co-ordination with the Epworth League in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, seems just around the cor-

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

ner. Relations with the other young people's societies are increasingly intimate. When the Red Cross or the Anti-Tuberculosis Society or the local Community Chest or any other such philanthropy makes its appeal, the League is never slow in coming into action.

6. THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE LEAGUE

One tremendous advantage which the Epworth League has as it tries to provide avenues of expression for the religious impulses of young people is its flexibility. It does not insist on any one rigid program to be carried through under any and all conditions. Such programs as it promotes are always regarded as no more than suggestions, with the understanding that local conditions are to decide what, in any certain community, is to be done. For this reason it is possible to see two groups doing absolutely dissimilar things in dissimilar ways; yet both are Epworth Leagues.

Not long ago a young girl came into a West Virginia mining town, eager to see what she could do to broaden the outlook of the families there. These mining families were largely composed of people who had lived in the Southern highlands from birth, who had grown up almost without schooling, who had been drawn into the raw mining camps—and of all the forsaken communities in the United States I think that the mining camps of West Virginia are the most forsaken—and whose lives had been so stunted by pitiless poverty and sodden squalor that they seemed almost to have lost the possibility of development.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

It was a desperately hard assignment. The young volunteer worker tried one thing after another. She had no difficulty in bringing the people—particularly the young people—to the church. Anything that promised a change looked interesting to them. But, once in the church, there seemed to be nothing she could do with them. Finally, she tried a simple adaptation of the League program. Now, this is no miracle story. It was long, hard going. The idea of indulging in any form of self-expression was so new to these young folks from the mines that it took weeks to percolate. But finally, timidly, they began to respond. Now there is a real League under process in that town. The young people there will ultimately provide a new standard of leadership for the next generation in that church and town.

Now compare that with the sophisticated crowd who make up the League in the First Church of the largest city in your State. There is not much outward resemblance, to be sure. But that is where the League may score. For the League can offer these young people in the city just as true a chance to develop and express their abilities as it has offered the young people in that mining town. So that, when you try to talk about the future tasks of the League, one difficulty arises from the fact that, given different circumstances, this flexible organization will always afford different tasks.

Here, for instance, is the way in which Doctor Kirkpatrick tells of one actual task that one section of

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

the League has already done: "The Epworth Leaguers of California have furnished a striking demonstration of what young people can do in the interest of good government. For twenty years or more the Christian people of that State had kept up a fight for prohibition, but had found it an uphill fight. The vote on a constitutional prohibition amendment in 1914 was lost by a majority of 169,245. A similar election was lost in 1920 by a majority of 65,062. While, of course, they had prohibition by federal amendment, there was no State law to back it up.

"Then," says Doctor Kirkpatrick, "in 1921, contrary to every prediction, a dry bill, known as the Wright Law, was introduced, passed both house and senate, and upon the signature of Governor Stephens, became a law. The enemy said, 'We will take it to the people by referendum, and the people will kill it.'

"A royal fight was on. There seemed little hope of winning. But every dry force joined together to beat the 'bootleggers' referendum.' A careful campaign was planned by the Anti-Saloon League, which developed slowly through the spring and summer of 1922. While the church people generally seemed to be pretty well aroused, there seemed to be unexpected apathy and indifference in many sections that gave the leaders no little concern.

"In September, Dr. A. H. Briggs, superintendent of the Anti-Saloon League, called 'Jim' Stinchcomb—that much-loved League leader of Northern California, whose untimely death in July, 1923, was mourned

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

by Leaguers everywhere—into his office, and said, 'I want to see you about dynamite.' He then outlined a plan whereby the Epworth League and other young people's societies might be enlisted, and supply the fire and enthusiasm which had been lacking in their campaign. 'Jim' was to lead in this phase of the campaign. His final commission was, 'Here is some expense money. Take authority; use good sense; begin now!'

"And 'Jim' did begin, and he saw it through. He arranged for a series of demonstrations in various centers through northern California, combining the forces of the Epworth League, Christian Endeavor, and B. Y. P. U. Gigantic parades were held, sometimes tying up traffic for two hours. Floats carried such slogans as these 'The Wright Law Is the Right Law,' 'Christian Endeavor Stands Square for the Wright Act,' 'No Good Citizen Will Break Down the Constitution,' 'Down With the Bootlegger,' etc. Great mass meetings were held, addressed by young people, debates were conducted, and everywhere, a most profound impression was made.

"On November 7, 1922, the date of the election, young people helped to get out a large vote, and after the polls closed, hundreds were at their posts of duty, watching the count, and reporting to the headquarters of the Anti-Saloon League. When the final count was in, it was found that the Wright Law had won a clear victory with thirty-four thousand majority."¹

¹From *Young People's Work for Young People*, by Blaine E. Kirkpatrick. Published by The Methodist Book Concern.

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

All of which is to be set down to the credit of the young people's societies of California. But why only California? Unless all signs are deceiving, the sort of fight which the church folk of that State found themselves involved in is the sort of fight that is likely to come in every State. The liquor forces are not yet finally defeated in the United States, as any person of intelligence knows. The hardest fight of all may be ahead—the fight to preserve prohibition after the majority have forgotten the rottenness of the conditions that obtained under the old wet régime. Why, then, should it not become a task of the League to furnish enthusiasm for that fight everywhere?

There will be tasks for the League which even the League has not yet attempted, seriously, to discover and perform. Let me suggest a single one. Take the presence, in hundreds of our communities, of young people of foreign parentage. They are in our schools. They are in our moving picture houses. They are, or soon will be, in our boards of aldermen; our corps of teachers. But they are not in our Protestant churches. Not often enough, at least, to make that the normal situation. If they are in Protestant churches at all, they are apt to be in ones which have been reserved for certain non-English speaking groups.

Here is a condition that a true patriotism, as well as a true Christian brotherliness, requires shall be dealt with. Why isn't it being done? Why isn't the League the best possible kind of organization to begin doing this? Mention was made a few pages back of the way

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

in which certain chapters are now experimenting to see how, definitely, they can apply the teachings of Jesus to their own communities. Why doesn't the presence of the young American born of foreign parents—perhaps himself born in another land—offer as fine an opportunity for practical Christian living and service as could be desired? It won't be long, I hope, before word will come of many chapters undertaking tasks of this kind.

7. CONCLUSION

This story must be brought to a close. I have tried to outline, in the briefest possible way, the main events in the life of this organization of which you are a part and the main trends in its development. It has not been possible to tell *all* the important things that have happened. You understand that; you did not, in fact, ask for that kind of a story. But I have tried to give you the "feel" of this great body of young people, as it has been in the years gone and as it is to-day.

I wonder how it "feels" to you? As for myself, I find myself seeing mistakes here, weaknesses there, shortcomings yonder. But I see so many other things that these flaws almost drop from sight. I see a chance for young people not only to be instructed in religious truth, but to have that truth worked into the vitals of life by carrying it out in practice. I see a movement that started with a sense of release, passing through a period of excitement and exaltation, and then steady-ing down to the year-after-year task of taking young

THE STORY OF THE EPWORTH LEAGUE

people in the most formative years and molding them into intelligent maturity, bringing out at the same time their possibilities as Christian leaders.

Somewhere I hear someone say, "The Epworth League is not what it used to be." It is not. Its members are younger, on the average, than they once were. It is now a true young people's organization. Its interests differ from the interests of the past. They are the interests of people in this different post-war world. Its habits of expression are different. The Epworth League is not what it used to be. Thank heaven! And be equally thankful that, as surely as it is not now what it once was, it is also not now what it shall become. Whether the future is to be larger and better than the present depends on those who are to-day Epworthians. The future is in your hands.



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